Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-FOUR • NUMBER TWO • AUGUST 1992

Is America on the Way Down? (Round Three)
Robert L. Bartley, Edward N. Luttwak & Critics

The Scandal of College Tuition
Thomas Sowell

Why Likud Lost—And Who Won
David Bar-Illan

Europe: Miracle or Monster?
Paul Johnson

Joseph Alsop & the WASP Ascendancy
Joseph Epstein

Once Again, Anti-Semitism Without Jews
Robert S.Wistrich

Politics & the Academy
Elie Kedourie

Books in Review: Sam Tanenhaus / Jeffrey Marsh / John Podhoretz / Caleb Nelson / William G. Hyland

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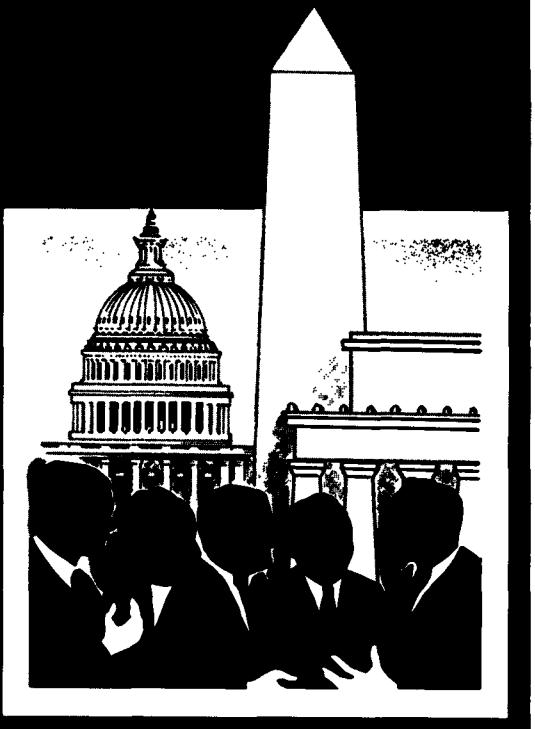

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Letters from Readers

Is America on the Way Down?

(Round Three)

In our March issue, Edward N. Luttwak and Robert L. Bartley debated the question "Is America on the Way Down?" In May, we published Round Two of this debate, with comments from nine writers who have in recent years dealt with allegations of American decline. The letters below (arranged in alphabetical order) cover both rounds, together with replies by Messrs. Bartley and Luttwak.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward N. Luttwak's wildly erroneous predictions about the Gulf War—weeks of combat, thousands of American casualties—are finally comprehensible when one reads his article on America's decline. What else would he have predicted of a country so hopelessly degenerate, unable even to handle his bags properly at Kennedy Airport?

Mr. Luttwak's article overlooks all evidence he finds inconvenient. Surely he is aware of the demographic data showing the aging of the German and Japanese populations in the next twenty years: the number of retirees will increase much more quickly there than here, and the ratio of workers to retirees will worsen badly. The burden on the national budgets and the effect on savings are obvious. In the U.S., the size of the baby-boom generation, and the greater percentage of women now working, combined over the last twenty years to produce the reduced productivity associated with new entrants to the job market. For the next twenty years, as these groups reach forty to sixty years of age, American society will reap the benefits. These are among the many reasons to disbelieve Mr. Luttwak's "straight-lining" of any downward trend he can find.

More surprisingly, he ignores the extraordinary contribution new immigrants are making to American society. Those who attend Cal Tech or MIT, or for that matter Harvard or Yale, are well aware that since the 1965 immigration reforms a huge migration of Asians has taken place, vastly enriching our society. To ignore the wonderful benefits of these population movements is a startling oversight for a man who is himself an immigrant to these shores.

Mr. Luttwak's lengthy complaint about Kennedy Airport reveals his real problem with America. Arriving here, he finds himself thrust into contact with . . . *them*. To add insult to injury, the very customs inspectors themselves are . . . *them*, and probably even ask him, "Whaddaya mean you're a consultant?"

This is a view of America that Henry Adams and Henry James would have appreciated. It appears that America is just not classy enough. More important than Mr. Luttwak's economic errors, which are based on his inaccurate and misleading data, is this fundamental antipathy to the society that remains the world's most open, most democratic, and most successful. . . .

ELLIOTT ABRAMS
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As far as he goes, Edward N. Luttwak is right. Readers of Correlli Barnett's *The Collapse of British Power* will recognize the parallels with the declining Britain of the 20's and 30's: half-educated workers, nerveless political leadership, uncompetitive businessmen, collapsing and capital-starved basic industries. The factor-price equalization theory says that under perfect competition, free trade, and mobility of factors of production, both absolute and relative factor prices will tend to be equalized between countries. True, the real world does not match the frictionless ideal of economic theory, but once it began moving in that direction with freer trade, more mobile information and finance capital, and greater competition, the grinding-down of our relatively high-wage workforce became inevitable. On the evidence, it will continue.

Blinkered optimism lets Robert L. Bartley evade this implication of globalism—and evade also the evidence of social disintegration in

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our soaring violence, the rising savagery among our young, the illegitimacy and divorce plagues, the dying work-and-save ethic. These menaces, like our live-for-the-moment debt explosion, stem from a collapse of religious and moral beliefs that shows little sign of reversal. It is this crisis of belief, not (*pace* Mr. Luttwak) fatalistic resignation, which "ensure[s] that the decline will continue." Mr. Luttwak at least grasps the wreckage of our mores; Mr. Bartley, bound for utopia, gives noneconomic problems a paragraph or two and sails on, to further digs at "apostles of decline." . . .

JOHN ATTARIAN
Ann Arbor, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Edward N. Luttwak has by far a more cogent and compelling argument than Robert L. Bartley. . . . Not only does he assemble an impressive body of evidence, . . . he also effectively rebuts the objections of his opponents, the free-trade internationalists, who actually represent the apotheosis of a liberal perspective rather than a conservative one.

In a number of specific cases—ranging from the Japanese transplants in the automotive industry to the direct purchase by foreign interests of our leading-edge industries of entertainment, biotechnology, commercial aviation, and computers—Mr. Luttwak demonstrates convincingly that it does indeed matter which country is in the driver's seat. . . .

His statistical evidence showing our relative decline in productivity and purchasing parities (the best measure of a nation's standard of living) vis-à-vis our Japanese and European competitors is impressive, and unsuccessfully challenged by Mr. Bartley. For instance, Mr. Bartley states that between 1983 and 1990 real disposable per-capita income rose in America by 18 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars. However, he does not give the comparative figures for Japan or the Federal Republic of Germany, which were significantly higher, nor does he rebut Mr. Luttwak's statement that over the last twenty years there has been a steady erosion in the earnings of non-farm, non-supervisory employees (over 80 percent of the workforce), with inflation-adjusted figures for 1990 having regressed to the 1965 level. When confronted by these contradictory claims, we have to conclude either that one of these gentlemen is playing fast and loose with the numbers or that the per-capita increase Mr. Bartley alludes to was enjoyed by only the top 20 percent of the workforce . . . and the standard of living for the majority of working Americans deteriorated.

When we move into the broader area of macroeconomic conditions, once again it is Mr. Luttwak rather than Mr. Bartley who is on target. According to Mr. Luttwak, the main source of our malaise is the chronic overconsumption and undercapitalization of our economy: the "capitalism without capital" charge that he levels throughout his article. In attempting to refute it, Mr. Bartley offers up a classic false analogy: he tells us that the immense and growing level of debt incurred by our country over the past decade is not only nothing to fret over, but actually an indication of our economic potency, since we went this route before in the 19th century, precisely in those decades when we were emerging as the world's industrial colossus.

What Mr. Bartley fails to see here are the crucial differences in the uses of that capital then and now. In the 19th century we were borrowing to build up our industrial plant and infrastructure, which we carefully protected through the enactment of significant trade barriers, enabling us eventually to dominate the markets in the world's leading commodities and retain those profits at home for further industrial development. The situation could not have been more different in the 1980's, when our borrowing was used to finance massive government spending in the less productive, albeit necessary, areas of health, welfare, and defense.

That is one part of the picture. The other part is that the foreign investment Mr. Bartley so proudly hails as the world's ringing endorsement of American capitalism was actually, as Mr. Luttwak demonstrates in many specific instances, a kind of corporate cuckolding whereby that investment capital was used to acquire primary control and the lion's share of current and future profits emanating from the innovation of American enterprise. The notorious case of the now defunct Ampex Corporation, a pioneer in videocassette technology which was licensed to and marketed by Sony, among others, who then plowed these immense profits back into the acquisition of CBS Records and Columbia Pictures, offers a sobering view of the realities beneath the surface of Mr. Bartley's "morning-in-America" boosterism.

So let us remember when we celebrate the next mega-album by Michael Jackson, or the next blockbuster hit at Columbia, that the Japanese are now at the top of the food chain when it comes time to divvying up the profits, and that there is virtually no reciprocity toward us to make up the difference. That is why it matters who emerges as the ultimate owners of the world's most lucrative enterprises. And without sufficient domestic capital there is no way that this erosion—which is really the loss of control over our most promising industries and economic destiny—can be ameliorated. And that, in any economist's language, should spell decline.

Finally, and most convincingly, the case of America's decline can be made by detaching ourselves from the thralldom of the mighty dollar and taking a more generalized look at our culture. I invite anyone who is old enough to remember what it was like to be alive in America in the 1950's, before the corrosive onslaught of the counterculture, . . . to compare what we had then with what we are confronted by now. If anyone can make this comparison and not come to the conclusion that there has been a frightening and precipitous decline—to the point in many areas of manifest barbarism—then that person is either being willfully dishonest or is so befogged by the vapors of liberalism that his capacity for effective judgment has been rendered impotent. . . .

LEONARD BAKKER
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Something is obviously wrong in the U.S., and not with our future economic prospects alone. Los Angeles is burning, crime is on the increase, and the war against drugs is not being won. The test scores of American students are as poor today as they were in 1983 when the National Commission on Excellence in Education presented its report. . . .

A basic change in values caused by an explosion of expectations since the end of World War II explains our troubles. The values I

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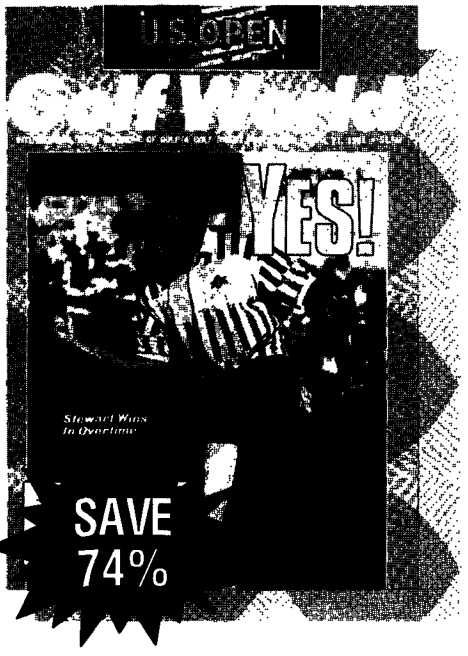

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refer to . . . are self-reliance, self-restraint, and self-discipline. They have been at the root of our past accomplishments, and they still govern in Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and Korea. There, but not here, they still help to shape the characters and expectations of the young, and to determine the levels of performance of adults. Here, these values are often disregarded or even dismissed as devious instruments used to oppress the powerless and the poor. . . . Yet they are the intangible factors which cause students to succeed at their studies and motivate workers to care about their work and the quality of their products. It is these values, more than any police force on earth, which maintain law and civil order. They bring stability to families and reliability to all other human relationships. They even determine how many graffiti are to be found on the walls and how much litter in the streets. Without them, societies decay and disappear from the stage of history.

Such concepts as the public interest, property rights, the setting-up of critical standards, have all gone out of favor and must actually be defended instead of taken for granted. Permissiveness is king. . . . In the name of equality, children object to limit-setting by parents, students . . . demand the right to determine their own curriculum and do not attend classes. Having shed the old values, we live with less civility, less responsibility, less decency, a diminished competitive vigor, and the breakdown of the family. . . .

It is easy to ridicule Edward N. Luttwak's "taxi-driver index," but he is essentially correct. How a driver dresses, speaks, and maintains his car tells a lot about his self-image and the expectations drivers have of themselves and of others. Those who do not treat themselves and their belongings respectfully are not likely to treat other human beings or their property any better.

The battle to restore old values and to resuscitate the family will be difficult, and its outcome will remain in doubt for a very long time. . . .

REUVEN BAR-LEVAV
Southfield, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Why does Edward N. Luttwak's answer to "Is America on the Way Down?" come closer to how I sense things than Robert L. Bartley's? By carefully picking the appropriate economic indicators, one can prove almost anything.

My maternal grandfather, who died 30 years ago, never owned a VCR. Neither did J.P. Morgan. My children do, but their futures are not as rosy as I would like. And I would wager that, to quote Mr. Bartley, "Park Avenue *would* lie awake at night worrying" if expenses continued to exceed income year after year in spite of books being balanced globally. He claims that "More than eighteen million new jobs were created" after the 70's, but our population grew by more than that, and how many better-paying jobs were lost, to be replaced by closer-to-minimum-wage positions?

AVROM A. BLUMBERG
Evanston, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert L. Bartley states that the proponents of decline refuse to "use their eyes and ears" and choose instead to confuse themselves with statistics they do not understand. Thus, in order to satisfy Mr. Bartley's strict research guidelines, I promise not to employ statistics I do not understand and will judge only the data which my eyes and ears bring to me.

While it is true that the U.S. is one of the world's great undeveloped countries (. . . Mr. Bartley cites the figure of 26.3 persons per square mile; by this measure, Canada, with 6.7 persons per square mile, would be even greater), it should also be remembered that the equally liberal John Locke believed that "numbers of men are to be preferred to largeness of dominions" and the "right employing of lands is the great art of government." Put another way, the question which Mr. Bartley should have attempted to answer is whether or not the land and labor of America are, today, being employed rightly.

Certainly, the Japanese know how to employ American resources—Mr. Bartley asserts quite proudly that Nissan, Honda, and Toyota (as a safeguard against protectionism) have all opened assembly plants in depressed areas. But do Americans themselves know what to do with their land? The high ratios which he cites of cars, VCR's, televisions, and computers to individual Americans naturally fail to take into account the origins of these high-value products. Yes, Americans "created" them, but to what extent do they reap the rewards?

Moreover, when Mr. Bartley focuses on America's current exports (i.e., bombs, missiles, armies, and precision weapons) he inadvertently confirms Paul Kennedy's thesis of military production eventually overtaking economic development and leading to decline. At one time, Britain's greatest "export" was the Royal Navy, whereas today (as seen and heard with my own eyes and ears last February), most English consumers are driving cars, watching TV's, and using computers which were designed and manufactured elsewhere.

To be sure, many jobs continue to be created in the U.S. but I would venture to say that, like Canada (in which I use my eyes and ears every day), the much-awaited "service" and "information" jobs are primarily in the low-paying areas of restaurant help, data entry, telephone sales, and private security—necessary services, but hardly marketable to the world.

Finally, Mr. Bartley fondly remembers the seven wonderful years of Reagan tax cuts and confidently dismisses trade imbalances with the remark that "for every buyer there has to be a seller." This is quite true, but as a corrective I would suggest to him that he also attempt to recall another vestige of the Reagan era, namely, the War on Drugs. As with all other imports, there has to be a buyer and a seller of illegal drugs, but there seems to be considerably less doubt regarding just which party in the drug transaction is more likely to reap the rewards. This may not be a "right" employment of land, but the interplay between dealers and addicts could be an instructive counter to Mr. Bartley's analysis.

PHILIP BOUSQUET
Nepean, Ontario, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bravo to Paul Craig Roberts, in Round Two of the debate on American decline, for best showing what is right and wrong with Robert L. Bartley's and Edward N. Luttwak's articles. Mr. Roberts is correct that the secularization of religion, combined with moral skepticism, is a sure-fire formula for disaster. . . .

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

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To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Although both Edward N. Luttwak and Robert L. Bartley present cogent arguments, I find myself agreeing more frequently with Mr. Bartley, particularly in his opposition to protectionism. As Mr. Luttwak, of all people, should recall, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 did indeed preserve some American jobs—in exchange for World War II. Bad deal, no?

But in fairness to Mr. Luttwak, Mr. Bartley seems to underestimate the many self-imposed obstacles facing America. Most of these are well-known, of course: corporate short-termitis, "child-centered" education, failure-rewarding social programs, affirmative-action quotas, etc., etc. Overcoming them will take more than a gasoline tax.

However, one obstacle seems to have escaped notice—the stubborn refusal of American industry to go metric.

To those not raised on them—that is, 90 percent of the human race—working with English weights and measures poses a difficulty akin to that of translating Navajo epic poetry. (Is this, perhaps, one reason why foreigners shun American-manufactured goods?) . . .

Perhaps the U.S. government could do as the British did: America's people could continue to use their beloved customary units in everyday life, while America's machines could (with some judicious prodding) become metric, and therefore salable abroad.

Whatever happens, I hope you make it. As a Canadian, I have selfish reasons for wanting the U.S. to survive and prosper; after all, what is a pilot fish without a healthy shark?

Gordon C. Galland
London, Ontario, Canada

To the Editor of Commentary:

Whether America is or is not in decline probably will not be known for decades and is, of itself, largely irrelevant. However, the lively debate between Edward N. Luttwak and Robert L. Bartley is valuable, apart from being a good read, as a starting point for examining our deficiencies and taking . . . steps to set America on the best course for the 21st century. So the debate must go on.

If you are taking a poll, then my vote is with Mr. Bartley that America is not in decline. Mr. Luttwak's support for the contrary view, based primarily on statistics and projections derived from them, does not take into account the economic restructuring this country is now undergoing. The process, albeit painful, will lay the foundation for the resumption of solid growth.

Martin T. Goldblum
Beverly Hills, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

For the sake of our children and their children, we would prefer to think that Edward N. Luttwak is mistaken, but his grim argument, although driven a bit too hard, . . . seems to resonate and ring true. Though Robert L. Bartley in his rebuttal dispenses a few pleasant points of light, the broader outlook remains generally dark.

My own speculation, hardly unique, on the cause of our apparent decline locates its inception in the 60's, when a worthy goal, that of eliminating the oppression of minorities, was somehow overwhelmed by a generation (my generation) of confused young people seeking, finally, little more than a license for self-gratification. Our elders, possibly unnerved by assassinations, unbalanced by rapidly accelerating change, and unsure about a war that they, too, did not fully support or understand, permitted too much too easily. Since then, a slack, self-indulgent attitude has been allowed, even encouraged, to flourish and infect our culture, our commerce, and our institutions.

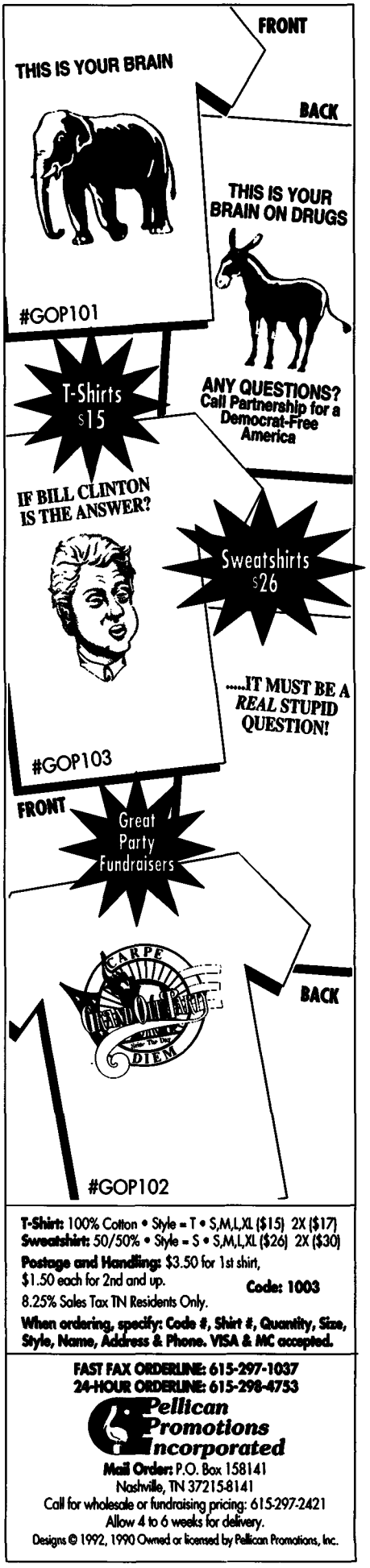
Mr. Luttwak is correct in asserting that "Anglo-Saxon-style individualism could only be successful so long as there was still enough Calvinism to go around." What we need now, though, rather than an upsurge in repression or conformity, is a greater degree of individual foresight, rigor, determination, and self-control. If and when, by virtue of these traits, we are collectively prepared to assume the full responsibility of our freedom, we will also be empowered to refocus our national ideals and redirect our national destiny. . . .

Harvey Gordon
Kalamazoo, Michigan

To the Editor of Commentary:

Your two superb articles under the rubric "Is America on the Way Down?" seem to be talking past each other.

While Edward N. Luttwak makes a powerful and accurate



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analysis of America's slide into a third-world standard of living, . . . Robert L. Bartley gives little real evidence to counter this analysis. Instead Mr. Bartley accurately points out that the world is adopting "American ideas of democratic pluralism and market economics" and that for the moment we have predominance in military power. He describes our currently wealthy society with pride and derides any concern about our persistent trade deficit as ridiculous. Then he goes on about the electronic revolution, the information revolution, etc., etc., and argues that we are in a position to build "a new version of the institutions of the *Belle Epoque.*" The fundamental error in Mr. Bartley's thesis is that while there are enormous prospects for positive changes in the world due to market economics, the march of technology, and so forth, this applies to the *world* and not just to America.

At the same time as these changes are occurring, the relative standard of living of most American citizens will probably be declining, as a result of the many depressing factors emphasized by Mr. Luttwak. Mr. Bartley, while rhapsodizing about the growth of world trade, totally ignores the failure of reciprocity in such trade. While the huge Japanese monopolies have incredibly unrestricted access to buying and controlling any part of the U.S. economy (Firestone Rubber, MCA Inc., Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures, etc., etc.), the reverse does not hold true. As Mr. Luttwak says, "A U.S. buyer would have greater chances of being allowed to acquire the Sistine Chapel than 40 percent (controlling interest) of Mitsubishi Industries." Of course, those few Americans who are wealthy enough to sell off their ranches, farms, homes, office buildings, factories, private colleges, movie companies, automobile companies, etc. to Japan Inc., will be comfortable for a few decades (unless confiscatory taxes reduce their profits) while their workers go on the dole or starve or revolt.

In his excellent book, *Agents of Influence*, . . . Pat Choate lists the six standard excuses used by the . . . half-a-billion-dollar-per-year Japanese propaganda machine in the U.S. to prevent any defensive action by the U.S. government. . . . Mr. Bartley in his article repeats Excuse Number 4—"globalization"—a concept which, to this Ph.D. physicist and engineer, is just globaloney from Wall Street and its bankers. These are the same people who told us that the huge transfer of wealth out of the U.S. with the jump in oil prices did not matter because it would be recycled into third-world governments. Alas, most of those loans are long in default and the middle-class U.S. taxpayer pays, as he is doing for the savings-and-loan scandal.

The globalization theme seeks to convince naive Americans that they can relax, that national borders are disappearing, that there is just a single global market, that national allegiance is outdated, so no one need worry about Japanese purchases of key American industries or about Japan's march toward global domination in key industries based on high technology. . . . I do not buy this and no concerned American should either.

The future is not immutable. Our slide can be reversed by putting high tariffs on Japanese autos and trucks until their imports into America are no more than three times the number of U.S. cars and trucks (made by U.S.-owned companies) sold to Japan; ordering that 75-percent ownership of major Japanese factories (including the two giant motion-picture entertainment companies) in the U.S. be held by American citizens; requiring, as Canada does, that an independent U.S. board must approve foreign purchase of any American company. Of course, Wall Street will scream that such action will prevent investment in the U.S., but this is nonsense. We are by far the largest market in the world and foreign countries (which have such restrictions themselves, and often tougher ones) will still invest and make money.

The problems of today, as delineated by Edward N. Luttwak, can be overcome with the technology of tomorrow if and only if Americans own and control and get the profit from the manufacture and sale of this technology. . . . Not, as the greedy investment bankers prefer, by selling out to Japan.

HOWARD D. GREYBER
Potomac, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Edward N. Luttwak's affirmative response to the question, "Is America on the Way Down?," . . . confused, insulting, and patronizing. . . .

Mr. Luttwak knows that the twenty-odd years after World War II were a period of American hegemony. The war created great vacuums in the vanquished countries as well as in most other parts of the world. It is not fair to use this artificially high point as a basis for comparison. In time, a new and entirely legitimate economic balance was created.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the affirmative argument may be at least partially correct, but Mr. Luttwak has not sustained the point in a clear and convincing manner.

HENRY S. HACKER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Both Edward N. Luttwak and Robert L. Bartley . . . ignore the important role of demographic trends in current American problems and future Japanese and European ones. . . .

Japan functions very differently from the United States for many reasons, but I think the most important one is the absence of ethnic diversity. This promotes uniformity, equality, homogeneity, and conformity. There is no "multiculturalism" debate in Japan. The Japanese have a strong streak of xenophobia and nationalism which leads them to have virtually no immigration. Indeed, they are even hostile toward Japanese who have been raised in foreign countries. But if immigration causes problems for the United States, its absence creates another set of problems for Japan.

Consider the Japanese population dilemma: with the longest life expectancies on the planet, a below-replacement fertility rate, and virtually no new immigration, the country's population is currently growing hardly at all, and after 2010, according to United Nations projections, will experience *negative* population growth. The working-age population is likely to start declining by the end of this decade.

If the Japanese start welcoming immigrants in order to maintain population growth, they will face exactly the same problems Mr. Luttwak complains about in the U.S., problems stemming from ethnic diversity and immigration from poor countries. . . . If, on the other hand, they do *not* welcome immi-

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grants, Japan faces a future of declining population and a shrinking labor force burdened with an ever-increasing share of population over sixty-five. . . . It is hard to believe Japan is the wave of the future when its population will be shrinking. Can Mr. Luttwak list the nations that have become dominant superpowers while their populations have declined?

Many of Japan's strengths come from its response to low labor-force growth. With workers scarce, Japanese business firms invest far more in labor-saving technology and capital than do American firms. They also take better care of their workers, offering them greater stability, recruiting the unemployed for new jobs, and investing more in job training. The result of such policies is rapid growth in productivity and low unemployment. American business has not behaved this way over the last twenty years because of the abundance of labor caused by the coming-of-age of the baby boom as well as high immigration rates. But as our population growth slows down, it is reasonable to believe that U.S. firms will behave more like their Japanese counterparts.

The dilemma that Japan faces—accept immigrants and have your cities "Americanized" or don't accept immigrants and watch your population age and decline—is also faced by Canada, Australia, Europe, and the more advanced Asian nations such as Taiwan and Singapore. . . .

The U.S. is . . . the most ethnically diverse country on earth, and as such, its ultimate contribution to the world may be in showing other countries how to transcend the population dilemma they face—as soon as we figure it all out for ourselves. . . .

BRIAN R. HORRIGAN
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Edward N. Luttwak begins his argument by extending current economic trends to well into the next century. He claims that "if present trends simply continue" we will become an impoverished third-world nation some time early in the 21st century. But the extension of trends into the future is not a reliable means of predicting events, and there are many examples of its misuse. At the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, for example, the number of infected individuals was doubling every six weeks. Extending that rate of increase over ten years led to the prediction that by 1990 or so every adult in the U.S. would be infected. But the doubling time of AIDS dropped very quickly to six months, and then to one year, and eventually the rate dropped so low that it seems entirely possible that 1992 will have the same number of cases as 1991. . . .

Similarly, population-control zealots have long been issuing alarmist reports predicting that the U.S. population would explode unless drastic steps were taken to curb reproduction. All these predictions have turned out to be wrong. The mistake was in assuming that the country would continue to reproduce at the rate which it did in the two decades following World War II.

There are two parameters which will limit the Japanese rate of growth over the next 50 years. The first is Japan's limited size. This island nation, smaller than California, is grossly overpopulated . . . and has a terrain that is mostly rugged and mountainous. There is simply a limit to how many factories can be built on these small islands. . . .

The second factor is the Japanese workforce. The Japanese have been described as "living like dogs and working like ants," but the generation that behaved this way is the generation which saw its country destroyed in World War II. It is highly questionable whether the generation of Japanese in grade school today will be as willing to exist under these conditions.

In his discussion of Japanese growth, Mr. Luttwak also makes the mistake of ignoring World War II. He points out that in 1970 "Americans were two-and-a-half times as productive as the Japanese." I am sure the statistic is true, but Japanese productivity in 1970 was still depressed as a result of the war. . . . Before the war, our economy produced 20 percent of the world's goods and services. After the war, having avoided the carnage of total war and strategic bombing, we produced 50 percent of the world's goods and services. Today our total is back around 20 percent. Rather than viewing this as a decline in our economy, we should view it as a recovery in the world's economy. . . .

Mr. Luttwak's discussion of the drop in earning power of American workers over the last twenty years can most charitably be described as muddled and confused. He claims that we are actually earning less now than in 1970, . . . but in fact wages have more than tripled during this time period. He then brings in inflation to write that, taking this factor into account, we earn less than we did in 1965. This is technically correct, perhaps, but that is all. We are, by any standard, much richer than we were in 1965. The "constant 1987 dollars" which are mentioned do not buy the same goods. I am typing this letter on a 486DX computer running at 33 megahertz. I paid $1,400 for it at a discount computer shop. In 1965 the best computer available cost several million dollars and could not do what my current computer does. My stereo sound system and TV are of such high quality that nothing manufactured in 1965 can compare. My CD player and laser-disc player are based upon technology which was not available in 1965 and so they could not be purchased in 1965 for any price. I will concede that the 55 cents I pay for a candy bar has outpaced inflation—i.e., the nickel bar of 1965 was a better bargain—but this does not support Mr. Luttwak's contention that we are on the way to becoming a new Bangladesh.

Mr. Luttwak next compares the earnings of American manufacturing employees with their Japanese counterparts, and says the Japanese earn more. Yes, but so what? That higher salary does not go very far in Tokyo, the most expensive city in the world. The typical Japanese residence does not have indoor plumbing. By any stretch of the imagination we are living better. Perhaps the best indicator of wealth is the possession of land. The area of the United States is . . . 25 times that of Japan. Since our population is twice as large, we have 12.5 times more land per person.

Throughout his article Mr. Luttwak demonstrates an almost total ignorance of the fundamentals of economics—the science which deals with the distribution and exchange of goods and services. Money is not in itself something of value, it merely represents wealth. If the Japanese give us cars and consumer electronics and take little pieces of paper with the portraits of dead presidents on them, we are better off. It costs us virtu-

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ally nothing to produce money. (I know, I used to work for the Mint.)

When we buy from Japan, they take our money and either buy goods from us with the money, or buy goods from other countries. At some point those dollars have to return to our shores where they are exchanged for our goods.

In practice, we buy from the Japanese what they are able to produce more efficiently than we can, while they buy from us what we produce more efficiently. They are better at producing cars while we are better at producing food. We give them our food for their cars. Both countries are better off. By permitting free trade we award our more efficient producers and force our less efficient producers to improve. . . .

Mr. Luttwak makes the point that if the Japanese own American manufacturing plants they get the profit. But the profits are generated in dollars, and so they must eventually return to this country. If the Japanese buy U.S. real estate we are not hurt. What are they going to do with Rockefeller Center, load it on a barge and sail it back to Tokyo? If the Japanese own this country the only way they can enjoy it is to move here. Will we be any the poorer if 200,000 Japanese millionaires come to our shores? The country has always been enriched by immigrants. The Japanese will be no exception to this rule.

Up until the 1950's an American car could not be counted on to start when the ignition key was turned. Today there is not one bad American car being manufactured. This is the result of Japanese competition. . . .

In the relationship between the United States and Japan, the U.S. has the advantage. If a wall were to be erected between the U.S. and Japan over which goods could not be transferred, the only change in this country would be a rise in the price of home electronics and cars. A small number of farmers would also be forced off the land. But we would survive. If Japan were denied our market, the results would be devastating. Millions of Japanese workers would be thrown out of work. The social contract which has governed Japan since World War II would be broken. The result might well be the collapse of the postwar system of government. It is quite possible that the Japanese would launch a war to avert internal collapse. The most likely target of that war would be the People's Republic of China. We are clearly better off continuing with our current policies than returning to protectionism. . . .

The relationship between the U.S. and Japan is clearly in the best interests of both countries, and there is absolutely no justification for the claim that we are on the path to becoming either a Bangladesh or a Brazil. . . .

SUSAN JORDAN
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was more than pleased—relieved would be more like it—to see that COMMENTARY has finally opened its pages to a full-scale debate on the decline of America. . . . In that debate Edward N. Luttwak has performed a signal service, while Robert L. Bartley has proven how hollow the conservative refusal to face facts head-on really is.

What is most deficient about the Bartley thesis is its lack of any sense of teleology, that is, any sense that economic activity is not self-justifying but must serve wider purposes. Thus, . . . Mr. Bartley sings paeans to the growth of cable-TV systems and VCR ownership without ever wondering what ends up on our TV screens thanks to these new inventions. He admits almost in passing that, yes, ours is not a civilization that could either support or generate a Toulouse-Lautrec—instead we have our Robert Mapplethorpes by the busload. But that is precisely the point: what has made our civilization so nihilistic in the past few decades is precisely this abandonment of the notion that material well-being, however important a blessing in its own right, must yet serve wider, more spiritual purposes or it will turn in on itself and result in precisely the orgy of violence we are now enduring.

The newspaper headlines in the few months since this debate appeared in COMMENTARY have only served to confirm Mr. Luttwak's thesis—and not in single file but in battalions. And I refer here not only to high-school students murdering each other . . . , or the addiction to drugs of so much of the population, or the morose mood of the electorate. I am also thinking of the poverty of the conservative movement as reflected in the election campaign so far. . . .

It is a remarkable achievement, in a way, to see the President's approval rating plummet so dramatically following so popular a war, but this is surely related to the same blinkered, Panglossian view of the state of America that informs every sentence of the Bartley article. Either conservative political thinking gets rooted in the same sense of reality that Mr. Luttwak displays or it will go the way of Charles Lindbergh and Robert Taft, leaving the field to liberalism. . . .

[FR.] EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J.
New York University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . How discouraging to find Edward N. Luttwak, most of whose writings are intelligent and insightful, once again in the same political bed as the crackpot Left. This time it is in bemoaning America's economic decline and in peddling worn-out snake oil in favor of protectionism, mercantilism, and "industrial policy." Alas, Mr. Luttwak emerges as a closet Gephardtian.

His evidence that America is sewer-bound:

1. Since World War II, Japan has grown faster than the U.S., which of course has also grown impressively. *Ipso facto*, America is becoming a banana republic.

2. The airports in America are in disgraceful shape compared with those of Europe and the Far East. One is reminded of the familiar old proof of the superiority of Communism based on comparisons between the Moscow and New York subway systems.

3. Tokyo is flooded with American prostitutes. Having myself never researched this market empirically, I can only wonder whether discovering Japanese prostitutes in pre-perestroika Moscow would have reinforced the proof, cited above, of the superiority of Communism.

4. Japan is willing to give America real goods and real physical assets in exchange for American financial assets and deeds to real estate. Real goods in exchange for paper—sounds like a good deal for the Yankees to me. For Mr. Luttwak, it shows the sky is falling.

In general Mr. Luttwak displays a fine 19th-century pre-Ricardian understanding of the balance of payments, international trade, and

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investment. . . . As for his views on "economic nationalism" and mercantilism, and his uncritical romanticizing of Japanese-style "industrial policy" (meaning bureaucratic politicization), I strongly recommend that Mr. Luttwak go back to being wrong about the things he really knows a great deal about, rather than being wrong about economics, his understanding of which is clearly limited.

STEVEN E. PLAUT
University of Haifa
Haifa, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a professional economist who has spent some time on inter-country comparisons of economic growth, I was distressed by Edward N. Luttwak's account of the state of the U.S. economy. . . . Mr. Luttwak repeats many of the errors Paul Kennedy made in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* in his use of economic statistics, including the wrongful use of current exchange rates to compare gross-domestic-product (GDP) levels across countries, and the wrongful focus on international trade balances as measures of economic strength. But he also adds some errors and confusions of his own. . . .

One of these is a confusion about relative and absolute decline. It is hard to fathom whether Mr. Luttwak is predicting an absolute decline for the U.S. economy (falling per-capita GDP) in the years ahead . . . or merely a decline relative to other major industrial countries. Whether he realizes it or not, the two carry very different implications for an assessment of the U.S. economy. An absolute decline in GDP per capita over any extended period of time would be absolutely bad—but fortunately, despite what Mr. Luttwak may imply, it is extremely unlikely.

On the other hand, a decline in the U.S. per-capita GDP relative to other industrialized countries is not news—it has been going on since the end of World War II, when the war-torn European and Japanese economies started from very low levels of per-capita GDP. Further, it is in part a result of deliberate decisions made by U.S. economic policy-makers throughout the postwar period that the quicker the European and Japanese economies caught up with us, the faster we might grow ourselves.

The cosmopolitan free-trade system led by the U.S. after World War II had as an objective that other Western economies would catch up with it. This objective was embodied in the Marshall Plan, the Bretton Woods International Monetary System, and the use of U.S. gold reserves to provide the necessary liquidity for the growth of our allies. As a result of this policy, other industrial countries have gone a substantial part of the way toward catching up with the U.S. while the U.S. has over the last twenty years continued to grow at its historic rate established in 1870. This policy was based on the sensible premise that trading with wealthier, more productive partners with which technology flows could be two-way would allow us to grow faster. Now that other countries are getting close to us, and the full fruits of this policy are about to be enjoyed, some are getting cold feet.

For these reasons, Mr. Luttwak's simple extrapolation of past growth rates 30 years into the future is flawed. Why should we expect the Japanese economy to grow as fast now, when it is the most productive economy and must forge its own innovations, as when it was number two or three and could cheaply borrow the more advanced technologies of the countries ahead of it?

A second of Mr. Luttwak's errors is in the area of statistical evidence. His use and interpretation of economic statistics are naive and his use of current exchange rates to compare GDP across countries is flawed. He recognizes the limitations of comparing international levels and growth rates of GDP, but does not qualify his conclusions accordingly. (He claims that they show "irrefutable" evidence of decline.) Finally, he claims that time-series statistics on the U.S. economy have "none of the flaws of international comparisons" and are therefore "undisputed." Wrong. Though they do not have the same flaws as international comparisons, they do have pitfalls of their own for the unwary user. Unfortunately, Mr. Luttwak falls into just about every pit. A few examples:

Mr. Luttwak makes much of our low savings rates compared to other countries—too much, when the hazards of comparing international rates are fully comprehended. Because savings are calculated as the difference between two very large and uncertainly measured aggregates, gross national product (GNP) and consumption, they are very hard to measure, let alone compare, across countries. Conventionally calculated measures of gross savings (which he uses) do not measure all savings. They do not, for example, count consumer expenditures on durable goods, which are clearly a form of saving. When a broader definition of saving is used, it has been estimated that two-thirds of the difference in savings rates between the U.S. and other developed countries disappears.

Moreover, savings rates are not calculated the same way in all countries. Japan, for example, includes government capital formation and a capital-consumption adjustment in its savings measure, while the U.S. does not. Fumio Hayashi estimates that adjusting for this difference reduces the Japanese savings rate in 1987 by almost half. After all the adjustments are made, it is probably safe to say that U.S. savings rates are still probably somewhat lower than in Japan and Europe. But it is not valid to claim that the difference is "disastrous."

When the net international investment position of the U.S. became negative in 1985, the popular press was almost unanimous in voicing its concern that we were becoming like Mexico or Brazil. Mr. Luttwak echoes these concerns, and adds some more countries to the list, such as Malaysia, India, and China. What he does not mention is that the net international position of the U.S. is calculated by using book values, and this imparts a tremendous downward bias to our net position since U.S. assets held abroad were generally acquired much earlier than foreigners' acquisition of U.S. assets. If all components are brought up to market value, the U.S. position in 1986, for example, is changed from a deficit of over $250 billion to a surplus of nearly $50 billion. Even if the U.S. were in a deficit, as Mr. Luttwak claims, the comparisons with less developed countries (LDC's) are ridiculous. Unlike LDC's, the U.S. debt is denominated in its domestic currency, so we face no problems servicing our liabilities should export earnings fall.

Mr. Luttwak makes much of the fact that real average hourly earnings for non-farm, non-supervisory workers (a majority of the total workforce) were not higher in

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1991 than they were in 1965. He tries to interpret this statistic as a measure of income for a large bulk of the population. This measure is grossly inadequate for such purposes—by definition, it leaves out all non-wage income.

A much better measure is real per-capita GDP, which increased by roughly 50 percent over this period. This alone should have tipped him off that he was using a misleading measure of income. The measure he reports is not even a good measure of total compensation for labor, because it includes only wages and salaries paid by employers and does not include other employer-provided non-wage benefits, such as life and health insurance, and pensions and other employer-subsidized savings plans. Given the tendency for non-wage benefits to make up an ever-increasing share of the compensation package, it is wrong to think that movements in total compensation can be accurately measured by movements in average hourly earnings. . . .

I am not suggesting that there are no serious problems with the U.S. economy. U.S. economic growth could be faster, U.S. entrepreneurs could be more farsighted, consumers more provident, policy-makers more intelligent. But the debate about the state of the U.S. economy and what to do about it is not helped by the sloppy use of statistics with little or no recognition of their meaning or measurement, or by ridiculous forecasts about the U.S. becoming the Brazil or even the Bangladesh of the 21st century.

STEPHEN PROWSE
Vienna, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward N. Luttwak predicts decline for America, whose people's "shared beliefs, above all in equality of opportunity in the pursuit of affluence" are doomed, he fears, to frustration. Robert L. Bartley retorts that the Sparta to the East "has collapsed and now even seeks to adopt American institutions of democracy and market economics"—by which he seems to mean exactly the same "shared beliefs" as those defined by his opponent; Mr. Bartley, however, thinks that the affluence being pursued will go on materializing in America. Then the "predominant activity" will be "collecting, processing, and communicating information." . . .

Given such unity of opinion between your opponents about what American beliefs really are, the differences between their predictions are quite trivial.

A people devoted to "equality of opportunity in the pursuit of affluence" is already in the final stages of irreversible decadence, quite on the Spenglerian model. . . . America, it seems, is to be a pure mechanism, without a single idea. If so it will not be surprising if Americans devote themselves to that form of communicating information so eloquently imagined by the editor of the *Wall Street Journal.*

Whether the newly free people to the East will continue to be impressed remains to be seen. A few years ago America still, for them, stood for a living idea, something more like human community, creativity, and freedom of spirit.

Would someone tell me whether poetry communicates information?

IAN ROBINSON
University College
Swansea, Wales

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the debate between Edward N. Luttwak and Robert L. Bartley, . . . Mr. Luttwak makes some obeisance to the professional economist's unhappiness with straight-line trend analysis because he considers it too simplistic. As a professional economist, I would answer that the problem is one of error rather than simplicity. Mr. Bartley does cite Malthus's monumentally erroneous projections but many other examples are also available. The tired old "joke" in elementary statistics classes is that if a straight-line trend analysis had been applied to conditions in 19th-century Manchester, it would have shown that the city would currently be under six to ten feet of refuse (including manure). Mr. Luttwak might find it informative to review the U.S. Department of Energy's predictions made in the 1970's for energy prices for 1985 and 1990.

Undeterred by the economist's problems with straight-line trend analysis, Mr. Luttwak plunges ahead fearlessly, and projects from recent trends in GNP per capita that in 2020, "the gap between Japanese and Americans at 5-to-1 would be just about the same as

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the 1980 gap between Americans and Brazilians." (How the refuse is piling up!) Mr. Luttwak does have the good grace to note that if purchasing-power parities are used, the U.S. leads the list and grudgingly concedes that these "can depict living standards more or less realistically." But he adds, "it is only comparisons based on straight exchange rates that determine the 'who-does-what-to-whom' of the international economy." (Predictably, Mr. Bartley picks up the purchasing-power parities ball and runs with it for a touchdown with international standard-of-living comparisons.)

Mr. Luttwak's point is not abundantly clear, but it seems to revolve around the supposed fact that it is gross exchange-rate values that determine which "parties" can buy and sell pieces of their economies, and that this will favor closed-door economies because open-door economies, like that of the U.S., depress the exchange rate of their currencies below their purchasing power at home. . . . Whatever the merits of the argument, we see trend analysis once again at work. With the "dirty float" in constant use in currency markets, Mr. Luttwak evidently believes that our monetary authorities will stand idly by while our standard of living is eroded in this fashion. (The financial news of February 28, 1992 was that the U.S. had intervened to support the dollar against the yen, for example.) Even so, it is not at all clear that the purchases of "attractive pieces" will diminish our standard of living.

Incredibly, Mr. Luttwak finds a way to use trends to deride the importance of purchasing-power plus gross-domestic-product criteria. He reports that the period of relative decline in this variable is just as evident and gives the trends of growth of this measure between 1970 and 1988. He does not, however, multiply the trend variable by the original amounts. I have done so and the figures in 1988 are as follows: U.S. = $19,540; Germany = $14,128; Italy = $12,958; and muscular Japan = $14,267. He concludes from all this that "the totality of all the relevant numbers contains irrefutable evidence that the American economy has long been in severe decline by world standards. . . ." He could have at least had the analytical integrity to state this as "severe relative decline."

Mr. Luttwak's infatuation with naive trend analysis extends to space as well as to time. In the classic putdown of statistical analysis, he generalizes from a broad sample of one when he uses Kennedy Airport in New York as evidence of severe decline in our economy. Many of us have done the compulsory hardship duty in JFK en route to Europe and elsewhere, but in my experience this airport fails to reflect the conditions in most of the nation's airports. I am not a frequent traveler, but during the last year I have flown in and out of or changed planes in Chicago; Raleigh, North Carolina; Washington, D.C.; St. Louis; and Detroit. Nowhere did I find other than clean, well-policed, and seemingly efficient airports. All of these flights originated, of course, out of our airport in Phoenix. Mr. Luttwak complains that the JFK terminals belong to near-bankrupt airlines and that this accounts for their shabby conditions. Why, then, is it that our spanking new Barry M. Goldwater terminal, largely occupied by America West Airlines, already in Chapter 11, is a model of cleanliness and efficiency?

As to the poor taxi service to the city, this is most probably a result of New York's medallion (monopoly) system for cabs. Mr. Luttwak should recall that the churlish employees in JFK are probably the best paid of similar employees in the nation, not to speak of the world. Could not it be the power of autocratic unions and the supine behavior of the politicians acquiescing in their demands that account for this behavior? . . .

As to the dreadful devastation encountered in the South Bronx and elsewhere in New York City, these conditions stem primarily from the political failure of the city to police itself adequately and the archaic rent-control measures still in force since World War II. . . .

To extrapolate the trends from JFK to the other airports in the nation, and to use these trends as well as those of other conditions in New York City as evidence of our national economic decline, would alone be sufficient to throw Mr. Luttwak out of court. In sum, a fair debate judge would have to enter a judgment of "no cause for action" against Mr. Luttwak in the debate, without even hearing Robert L. Bartley's arguments.

DAVID L. SHAPIRO
Scottsdale, Arizona

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

America is going in two directions at once. In some respects it is declining, in others it is growing greater and stronger. Thus both Edward N. Luttwak and Robert L. Bartley are right. America is an economic powerhouse, and Americans still enjoy a high standard of living compared to most of the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, as Mr. Luttwak points out, America's infrastructure is falling apart. Moreover, in spite of the high per-capita ownership of cars, washing machines, television sets, and so on which Mr. Bartley points to, conditions for American workers began to deteriorate after the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980.

From the end of World War II until the election of Reagan, American workers ascended steadily out of the lower class up into the middle class. This was due to the growth of trade unions and various government programs. During that era American workers achieved health and pension benefits, became homeowners on a large scale, enjoyed paid vacations, and sent their children to college. Often they did this on one income; not so now.

Nowadays schoolchildren come home to empty apartments because both parents are away at work, assuming that the kids are lucky enough to live in a two-parent family. Few two-income families can afford to buy a house. People are thrown out of work because plants close, only to reopen in foreign countries where wages are paltry and working conditions abominable. For this and other reasons, nobody can depend upon a steady job. Health and pension benefits are getting harder for workers to come by. There are fewer and fewer good union jobs. A college education for the sons and daughters of working people is out of sight.

So no matter how bright the statistics look, no matter how good some members of the business and professional elites have it, American workers are sinking out of the middle class and back down into the lower class.

HUGH SHEEHAN
Fremont, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The May issue of COMMENTARY—containing the second round of your debate on American

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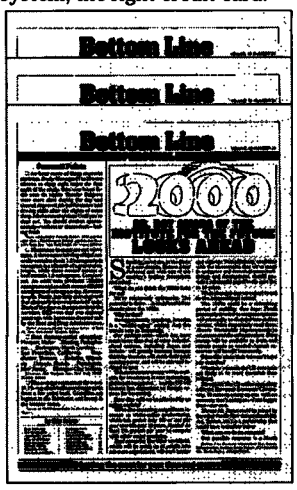

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decline, and mostly attacking Edward N. Luttwak's thesis on the "third-worldization" of America—arrived simultaneously with the nationwide wave of riots, looting, and arson, which fully confirmed Mr. Luttwak's position.

One must separate the two parts of his argument. America's relative economic decline, a . . . consequence of the much-desired recovery of Europe and Japan from the ashes of war and the brilliant rise of newer Asian states, is a perfectly natural and healthy event. . . .

But the decline of American society in *absolute* terms over the last three decades is unmistakable. Gargantuan budget deficits, driven by the unstoppable growth of redistributionist "entitlement programs," are pushing our nation to bankruptcy and financial collapse. Street crime has risen greatly in most cities and many suburban enclaves, . . . exacting direct and indirect costs estimated at $200-$300 billion each year. The schools of our major cities are increasingly being equipped with metal detectors, at a cost of tens of millions, considered the only means of dissuading teenagers from bringing guns into the classroom and shooting one another. And in the heart of New York City, an underclass mob shouting "Kill the Jews!" can corner and stab to death a young rabbinical student from Australia, as part of what is arguably the worst outbreak of worldwide anti-Semitic violence in five decades.

None of these examples of complete social collapse or the many others cited by Mr. Luttwak appears to bear any causal link to the economic successes of European and Asian nations. Indeed, it is almost a slur on the third world to describe them as such; they would be as unthinkable in many of the world's poorer nations as they were in the America of just twenty or thirty years ago. . . .

Then there is the Los Angeles riot. During the same period that the U.S. government was issuing a travel advisory warning Americans to avoid trips to Sierra Leone, because of a military coup and urban fighting, Japan and several other nations were issuing similar advisories against trips to major American cities, for much the same reasons. We saw scenes of Korean shopkeepers, armed with automatic weapons, defending their lives and property against mobs intent on destroying both, with the forces of state authority nowhere to be seen. When the government of an urban, solidly developed nation such as South Korea is forced to protest the lack of protection from mob violence afforded its ethnic nationals in America's second largest city, we realize how low we have sunk. . . .

As Robert L. Bartley correctly pointed out in his original rebuttal to Mr. Luttwak, some crucial sectors of the American economy are competitive, even tremendously so, notably entertainment, biotechnology, and computer hardware and software. . . . But these successes cannot long survive the decline of our system of government finance, our endlessly litigious tort system, and a level of personal safety in our major cities below that of Bangkok or Bombay. In an increasingly mobile world, America's best and brightest may soon begin to consider fleeing our urban centers for ever more distant suburbs, or, if they choose to retain urban amenities, the great cities of Europe or Asia.

The enemy behind America's decline into third-world status is not Japan, or Korea, or Europe. It is ourselves.

RON K. UNZ
Jackson Heights, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Having just decided to accept the loss of most of my life's savings by selling my New York real estate and thereby purchasing the option of leaving town, I read the exchange on America's decline with a feeling of personal involvement. I believe many of Edward N. Luttwak's observations are correct, so correct that I accepted the loss described above in order to engineer my own escape from the . . . pathologies he describes. But there is one point which I believe Mr. Luttwak fails to analyze properly, and another whose overriding importance he does not emphasize sufficiently.

The point I believe he analyzes improperly is the importance of the decline of our relative productivity when measured against the Japanese, Europeans, and others. Our society is not harmed when the relative productivity of other economies improves, so that they can, after debilitating wars, or many years of development, produce plate glass (for example) at $3.00 per square foot, while American factories produce it for $3.50. Assuming that this change is permanent, all it means is that American plate-glass companies will simply dissolve and their employees will become available to produce something else, such as high-tech medical equipment. Far from being harmful to American society, this raises the standard of living of most American consumers, because everything they buy that has plate glass in it, such as cars, homes, etc., will now be cheaper.

This type of economic dislocation has always been with us, and always will be. It is similar to the dislocation suffered when, for example, Southeastern paper-mill employees lose their jobs to employees in Northwestern paper mills whose plants are more efficient. The Southeasterners may temporarily slide down the economic ladder, but in a dynamic, innovative, savings-oriented economy, they will eventually find new employment. Indeed, even if their absolute wages go down, their standard of living can still go up—if the technology of goods production continues to become more and more efficient, resulting in cheaper and cheaper plate glass, televisions, whole-wheat bread, etc.

The real danger, which is a point Mr. Luttwak makes but which he fails to emphasize sufficiently, is that the temporarily unemployed Southeasterners may suffer a decreased standard of living because their society has strayed too far from the middle-class values which allow the technology of production to become more and more efficient.

It is these middle-class values which result in more high-tech medical-equipment firms opening, and thereby creating more jobs. It is these same values which result in more savings, more employment, more nuclear families with well-adjusted children, more literate employees, and, indeed, more satisfaction in our daily lives, as airport attendants, telephone operators, etc. perform their roles properly.

The real cause of America's decline, therefore, is the destruction of middle-class values, and not the relative rise in the productivity of other economies. And the shame of this is that most ordinary citizens still adhere to these values, but their ability to protect them has been taken away by (1) liberals, who do not believe in them, and (2) a corporate and political

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power structure that is not willing to fight for them. I am convinced that the second group could win over the first, but what we need is a leader who could mobilize the middle class into forcing the corporate and political power structure to become engaged in the current culture war.

The arrival of that leader any time within the next twenty or thirty years will result in the Gettysburg of this culture war which I believe the middle class will win, as our inherent strengths and numerical superiority are overwhelming. There are still more plumbers, hotel clerks, and accountants, with nuclear-family-oriented, middle-class values, than there are prison sociologists, television "journalists," and liberal academics. If it comes to a fight, the plumbers will beat the sociologists, especially given the lack of confidence most liberals now feel in their hearts.

The key question for the next generation, therefore, is not, Are we declining? but rather, Where is our middle-class Patton?

MICHAEL WEINBERGER
The Federalist Society
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The most revealing fact in Edward N. Luttwak's persuasive article is that, in *absolute* terms, America's standard of living is in decline, with Americans over the last twenty years steadily earning less proportionate to the cost of living. Anti-declinists somehow manage to ignore or downplay such startling facts.

It is worth noting, too, that Joseph Nye and Samuel Huntington, both of whom are enlisted by Robert L. Bartley in his anti-declinist argument, merely make the case that decline is not inevitable; they do not deny that if present trends continue, America will decline *relative* to other nations. As I read Nye, he is not claiming that the U.S. will not decline economically and politically, just that such a decline would not be as precipitous as Great Britain's, since the U.S. has certain natural advantages. But it is no consolation to be told, in effect, that America might become only a second-rate country rather than a third-rate one. . . .

Mr. Bartley looks forward to the wealth-creating energies of the second industrial revolution in which information freely and instantaneously crosses national boundaries. But nations must have certain prerequisites for harnessing the economic forces of the second industrial revolution. In the case of the U.S., we would need extensive retraining programs for highly skilled workers such as those in the aerospace industry, far more investment in corporate research and development, and a several-hundred-million-dollar investment annually in engineering education, including generous scholarships for engineering students. (The impending shortage of engineers is one problem that could be solved simply by throwing money at it.) Not all nations have these prerequisites in an equal degree. The U.S., as it happens, stacks up badly against Germany, Japan, and other up-and-coming countries in this connection.

Mr. Bartley's paean to the globalism of the new industrial revolution reminds me of what was once said by Bertrand Russell: he loved humanity but despised individual men. Mr. Bartley's economism loves the world and ignores the so-called "competitive advantage of nations." To ensure our competitiveness, the U.S. government should do for struggling industries what the Reagan administration did for Harley-Davidson when it reversed its hands-off policy long enough to keep the company from being destroyed by foreign competitors. The government should also intervene on behalf of new high-tech industries that are being strangled in their cribs by government-aided competitors abroad. . . .

No doubt we are all capitalists now, but what *kind* of capitalists are we? Should we, like the Germans and Japanese, be advocates of regulated capitalism, with government playing an active role, or should we continue to be advocates of anti-government laissez-faire capitalism? Anti-declinists who peer into the future and see either the Big Brother of socialism or a laissez-faire-induced vista of boundless economic growth simply beg the question of what kind of capitalism works best.

Although I believe regulated or managed capitalism works best, I am not oblivious to government's ability to bungle things. I believe, in fact, that Mancur Olson's thesis of "institutional sclerosis" offers an interesting gloss to the question of direct government intervention in the marketplace. Olson's thesis, in effect, is that the U.S. did Japan and Germany a favor by defeating them in World War II because we thereby enabled them to build a new and healthier economic and political system. Olson argues that stable societies like America and Britain are especially prone to slowdown because their institutions are beset by special-interest groups that become more entrenched over time. Sclerosis sets in and economic growth is hampered.

This means government intervention in the marketplace is more problematic in the U.S. than in Japan and Germany. . . . I believe, nevertheless, that this problem with government intervention is one of practicality rather than principle. The principle of government intervention is still a good one, despite our relatively sclerotic institutions.

Only with a sufficient mixture of prudence and boldness can we hope to overcome the prospect of economic decline and a significantly lower standard of living.

KENNETH D. ZARETZKE
San Diego, California

ROBERT L. BARTLEY writes:

What I have been trying to figure out is: how come decline is so much *fun*? Why does the notion of national decline catch fire just as a two-generation rival is collapsing into ruin? What roots make decline so precious that an attempt to bring good news results among some in an outpouring of ill-temper and even anger?

I would like to suggest that the fantasy of decline, like other fetishes, is a form of escapism. For if the ills we see around us are the result of a declining civilization, there is nothing *we* can do. We can enjoy the luxury of hurling rhetorical thunderbolts, but are excused from thinking about what might improve our condition, let alone casting votes or raising children or taking ordinary civic actions that actually might make a difference.

Take the notorious taxi ride from Kennedy Airport into Manhattan that Edward N. Luttwak described in his article in the first round of the debate. From my own experience of traveling with him, I have the impression that he would enjoy crossing swords with your archetypal New York taxi driver, and would be disappointed to find a tidy and polite one. But if a citi-

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zen feels it important enough, he has the option of reporting abusive, dishonest, or notably incompetent drivers. Having done so, I can testify that the New York Taxi and Limousine Commission is crying for help from the public in trying to improve drivers' manners, and is delighted and surprised on the rare occasions it finds a good citizen willing to help.

I mention this because the anecdote captures my reaction to the theme that runs through the letters from my critics. I had thought "decline" usually refers to geopolitics; it is self-evidently absurd to argue that the strategic balance has shifted against the U.S. now that the Soviet empire has succumbed to imperial overstretch, as Paul Kennedy did not predict but Henry S. Rowen and Charles Wolf did. More recently "decline" has referred to some kind of economic "competition," and it is to this I addressed my remarks, though in fact economics is not a win-lose game but a series of mutually beneficial arrangements among consenting adults.

Now I find myself responsible for graffiti, materialism, the homeless, the scourge of drugs, the problem of education, the decline of values, and the erosion of Calvinism. Fair enough, I suppose, in the sense that confidence and will are an important part of national standing. I admit there is one way we can decline, as I said in my article: "If this neurotic pessimism becomes a self-realizing prophecy."

As I read these letters, though, I keep wondering where their authors were during, say, the long line of Supreme Court decisions that outlawed prayer, or even a moment of silence, in the public schools? Would they today support stronger vagrancy laws, and the kind of judges who might uphold them? Did they think that deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill was a progressive step? Did they see any drawbacks to having inner-city children spend a lot of their school day riding buses? Did they cheer or boo during Woodstock, and the rest of the 1960's drug culture? Did they support Jesse Helms in his opposition to federal funding for the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe? What did they think about Dan Quayle and Murphy Brown? I certainly would not expect them to support the religious Right or the anti-abortion movement, but somewhere in their hearts is there a twinge of sympathy?

I am not saying that Dan Quayle, to take him as shorthand for the above paragraph, has all the right answers. But surely he has asked some of the right questions, and surely (or almost surely) it is not beyond our capacity as a society to take these issues seriously, to start a dialogue that might reverse the decline in values that troubles my critics. It troubles me too that we have arrived at a situation where prayer in school is bad but condoms in school are good. We can throw up our hands and say the nation is declining. Or we can start to rethink some of our own value assumptions, admit that the often overbearing Calvinists were onto something, and work to retrieve their part of the truth in a way compatible with our modern, fluid, and often overwhelming civilization.

As for economics, let us go back to the Luttwak taxi ride. A careful reader of his article will notice that to travel from Tokyo to Narita Airport, he did not take a taxi, as he did from Kennedy Airport to Manhattan. At the $200-plus fare, almost no one does. He says the bus ride to Narita took an hour, a miracle; I wonder if he heeded the sign in the station to use the rest room before the ride. While a finally-opened train has improved matters, any experienced Asian traveler will tell you Narita competes as one of the most inconvenient, overcrowded, and uncomfortable air terminals in the developed world.

A similar idealization of Japan is endemic in the "decline" debate. Japan is a nation with a third-world housing stock, and a far from overpowering industrial infrastructure. (Yes, they have bullet trains, but try to get a reservation on one.) While we should certainly admire Japan's industrious and well-educated workforce, in the absence of immigration it faces daunting demographic prospects. Its political system is, if anything, more sclerotic than our own. Its consumers and producers, while still modest by American standards, are demanding a larger slice of the economic pie.

Above all, the great motor of Japanese economic expansion, the access to cheap capital, has become a relic. As I write this, the Nikkei stock index is just over 16,000 and headed south, down from its record 39,914 as 1989 trading closed. While we have been debating American decline in 1992, the Nikkei has dropped 30 percent as the Dow Jones averages have set new records. Tokyo land prices have gone from astronomical to no-bid. The Japanese banks, pressed to meet international capital standards, find that highly leveraged loans are turning bad.

The pessimistic view of all this is that where the U.S. had a bubble in the 1980's Japan had a superbubble—that our problem will not be fending off Japan but scraping it off the floor. The optimistic view is that the formerly astronomical price-earnings ratios of Japanese companies are being arbitraged to international levels, as a one-world market would predict.

I for one hope that this optimistic view proves true, that the decline in financial values does not disturb Japan's admirable industrial companies. For I think we live in one world, and that Japanese decline would diminish us. I simply do not care about the skin color of the owners of Rockefeller Center; if the current slide in Japan forces them to liquidate, they will only sell it back to American investors for less than they paid.

The other side of this coin is that in the 1990's, the U.S. econ-

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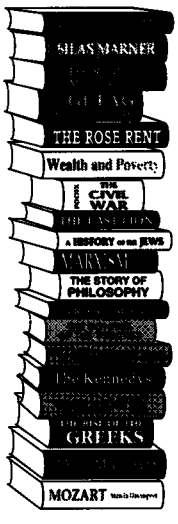

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omy will not be able to depend on Japanese savings and investment. We will have to provide more of our own capital. This will happen automatically through the marketplace, but will happen much more easily if the U.S. government lightens its punitive taxation of capital, starting but not ending with lowering the capital-gains tax to world levels. We should also adjust our tort-law rules to world standards—no contingency fees, and the loser pays court costs—quenching an insatiable parasite. There certainly are plenty of ways to improve the American contribution to world prosperity, if only we stop wallowing in "decline."

Yet we have to spend our time and effort on the absurd. It is preposterous to project current values and exchange rates into the long term; if the Nikkei continues on its current path, by the end of the century you will be able to buy all of Japanese industry for 3 percent of its 1990 value. It is equally bizarre, or at least economically meaningless, to say the American standard of living is in decline absolutely when real per-capita income is increasing. And even if the U.S. should decline in some relative sense, to say that it is becoming a third-world nation is simply silly. What kind of fascination makes intelligent people proclaim nonsense, and to all appearances, actually believe it?

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK writes:

1. I admire the poise of the critics of my anecdotage. As with upper-class Indians who learn from childhood to step deftly over the quadruple amputee begging on the pavement without actually *seeing* him, my critics are unmoved by the variegated display of Washington, D.C., within five blocks of the White House, and all other such displays in virtually all cities, wherein savagery competes with poverty, neither gaining on the other. Out in the countryside, they do not see the proliferation of mobile homes with a wrecked car or two in lieu of a garden, and do not ask themselves how many ex-homeowners live in them, or the sons and daughters of homeowners. In shops, garages, their own workplaces, they do not encounter the recent products of U.S. high-school education reading even labels slowly, unable to compose their words, not even trying the simplest mathematics.

2. Several readers refer to my straight-line projections of economic point data. Let me assure them that I do not believe in the predictive powers of pencil stubs, rulers, and bits of graph paper. But I do believe that evil outcomes must be actively avoided, and certainly hope that they will be. By the way, my projections, however crude, cannot be compared with Paul Kennedy's, as some have done. He started off from a 1950 base, fatally distorting the outcome because the European economies were still recovering from wartime ruinations, while the Japanese recovery had barely begun.

3. My critics laugh off the evidence of declining real wages, moaning at my innocence in accepting the standard consumer price index (CPI) at face value. As a matter of fact, I am unimpressed by the supposedly corrected alternative: in its essence the index-number problem is incapable of solution. But how about this for readers sadly old enough to remember those days: it seems intuitively obvious to me that $5.69 in 1978 (before the great inflation) was worth more than the $10.17 of November 1990. What do you think?

4. Several readers confuse living standards with the quantity and quality of objects that different populations can buy.

5. My critics are generally convinced that the United States can prosper magnificently without either saving for capital investment, or educating its labor force in decent schools. It follows that the Europeans and Japanese who save 20-30 percent of their income, and waste their tax money on nationwide systems of elementary and secondary education that actually educate, are simply fools. Who knows? Maybe the critics are right. But I would still like to live among civilized human beings—so if I give up the savings bit, will they let me have the elementary and secondary education? (One thing not to be allowed, however, is the fantastical claim that the uniform nationwide systems are inferior to the U.S. average.)

6. My critics are not vulgar egalitarians. When last estimated (1989) the richest 1 percent of all families owned 36.2 percent of the nation's total wealth in private hands; i.e., the sort of proportion found in the Philippines, but not in any other first-world country. At $6.14 trillion, the combined net worth of the richest 1 percent was greater than the total net worth of the bottom 89.9 percent of all American families at $5.2 trillion dollars. The top 1 percent is not our version of "the seven families"—more than 900,000 families fall within the top 1 percent. It turns out, however, that the superrich have been gaining ground on the merely very rich. In 1983, just under a quarter (24.1 percent) of the nation's total private wealth was owned by the richest 0.5 percent of all families, 400,000+ families in all, with an average net worth of $5.86 million. But by 1989, the top 0.5 percent of 470,000+ families owned 29.1 percent of all private household wealth, and their average net worth had almost doubled to $10.3 million.

The celebrants of American prosperity among my critics who are at least among the top 1 percent, if not the top 0.5 percent, know what they are doing. The rest cut a pathetic figure as they sing for another's supper.

7. Incidentally, the drift toward the third-world pattern of income distribution, with a poor majority, a rich minority, and a small class in the middle, has lately been illustrated by a 1992 Bureau of the Census study: the proportion of all American families with "low" incomes ($18,576 and below) increased from 10.9 percent of all families in 1969 to 14.7 percent in 1989; the proportion of "high"-income families ($74,304) also increased, from 14.7 percent to 22.1 percent; but the proportion of American "middle"-income families (i.e., between $18,576 and $74,304) *declined* from 71.2 percent to 63.3 percent. Thus over two decades, the great American middle class became significantly smaller, even as its counterparts continued to expand in other first-world countries.

8. Some readers still seem to believe in David Ricardo's tale about comparative advantage and the absolutist free-trade ideology to which it has given birth: if England is more efficient than Portugal in producing textiles, and Portugal is more efficient than England in producing wine, both countries are better off if England produces all the textiles they both need, and Portugal produces all the wine, with each country then importing its unmet need from the other.

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I know that the theory is still taught in every economics class and printed in every textbook. I know that it is logical to a fault. Why should the Portuguese strain to produce, say, three yards of woolen cloth when, with the same effort, they could take advantage of their favorable climate to produce, say, four barrels of good Port wine, and then ship just one to pay for the import of, say, five yards of better British cloth?

But that is only an instantaneous depiction of reality. What happens over time? For one thing, as prosperity grows and people are no longer content with one work outfit and one Sunday outfit, the demand for textiles increases by 200 percent, 300 percent, 500 percent over the years. By contrast, the individual demand for wine grows little if at all, leaving the Portuguese economy stagnant except for sheer population growth, while the English economy grows rapidly in this textiles-and-wine world. For another thing, the theory ignores the very different technological potential of each industry: over the years, textile producers can mechanize and eventually computerize their production, while wine is still pressed by the bare feet of bucolic peasants.

Most important by far is what happens to each society over time under the rules of free trade: the British textile industry and its skilled workers, foremen, designers, engineers, color chemists, and managers will need, and support, a whole variety of educational, technical, and scientific institutions and projects that can germinate the seeds of future industrial progress. By contrast, Portuguese peasants, vintners, and landlords will need and support none of the above in their simpler economic lives. Moreover, Britain's textile industry demands a textile-machinery industry as well; a machinery industry in turn gives birth to other industries, while Portugal's wine industry will still support only coopers and their barrel-making.

To be sure, even free-trade theory recognizes an exception: it allows that "infant" industries (or war-ravaged industries) can be usefully protected for a short while, until they can stand on their own feet. But those who believe in free trade have failed to recognize the real significance of the tidal waves of rapid technological development that can now totally outdate products in a few years (remember "eight-track tapes"?) and entire industries in a few more (e.g., batch-production steel). That significance is simply this: nowadays a perfectly grown-up industry can become a helpless infant at any time. Aside from the world leader of the moment in any particular industry or product line, all other countries might be left only with infants in need of protection. If help is refused in horror of the evils of "protectionism," technologically overtaken industries must die, as the U.S. consumer-electronics industry has died, instead of recovering to compete again—as they might, if their markets are protected for a while. Hence the theory is itself invalid for all practical purposes, because the one allowed exception happens to apply precisely to the fastest-growing, most creative, and most promising industries. In other words, the "infant" exception is now more important than the rule.

9. My critics are free from any hysteria about crime. They are unimpressed by our permanent *intifada* with its 8 million larceny thefts, 3 million burglaries, 1.6 million motor-vehicle thefts, 1 million aggravated assaults, 639,000 robberies, 102,000 rapes, and 23,000 murders at the last count (1990, rounded). Still, Ben J. Wattenberg in Round Two and others probably hesitate to visit Naples because sometimes cars are stolen over there. That corresponds to the official view: the State Department in Washington, D.C. (1990 population: 606,900; FBI index of major crimes: 65,389) solemnly issues "travel advisories" warning tourists to stay away from Israel, Northern Thailand, Colombia, etc., where fewer tourists have been killed, robbed, or beaten over the last ten years than in any recent Washington, D.C. summer season.

On the other hand, I am sure that they think that European and East Asian visitors are sissies, because they are so often left speechless when they encounter what my critics take for granted: the unending wails of police sirens in the city night; the proliferating "gated" communities with their own private police; the insistent warnings to avoid this or that entire part of town; and the advice given them to surrender wallets and watches quickly and uncomplainingly if asked, even—or especially—if the robbers are mere children. Above all, my critics do not ask themselves why American crime, never comparable to Europe's or Japan's for obvious reasons (immigrant society, racially divided, etc.), cannot now be compared even with itself, as of thirty or twenty years ago. And it is not just blacks, by the way: in the overall serious-crime index a two-thirds share is perpetrated by whites. All this is quite enough to show how abnormal is the situation that now seems normal to my critics.

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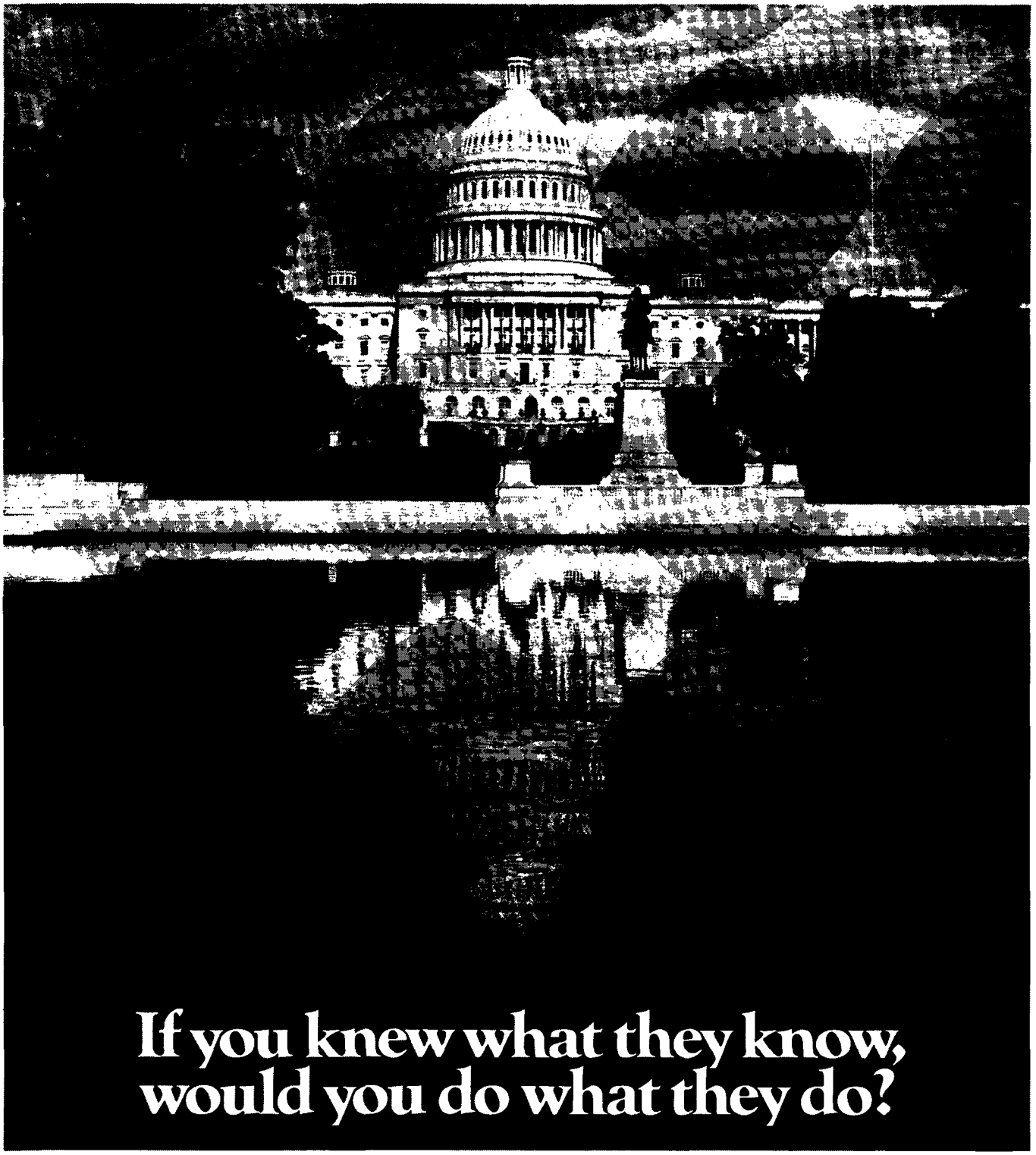

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The Scandal of College Tuition

Thomas Sowell

In a world where parents go into debt to finance their children's higher education and where alumni, corporations, and Congress are besieged with calls for more donations to colleges and universities, the time is long overdue to ask why college is so costly. Nobel-prize-winning economist Milton Friedman has estimated that colleges could operate at a profit, charging about half of what most Ivy League institutions charge. Why then does college cost so much? What is going on?

The average tuition at American colleges and universities rose every year throughout the decade of the 1980's, at a rate much higher than the general rate of inflation in the economy. Private colleges led the way, charging not only the highest tuitions but also taking a growing percentage of family income. In academic year 1976-77, the average tuition at private four-year colleges was less than 17 percent of median family income but, by academic year 1987-88, their tuition was more than 22 percent of median family income. By academic year 1990-91, there were 255 private colleges where tuition alone was $10,000 per year or more. By no means were these all distinguished institutions.

Mitigating the full impact of these charges were: (1) the widespread availability of financial aid; (2) the fact that most private colleges charged less than $8,000; and (3) the fact that most students attended public institutions. Nevertheless, the sums which had to be paid represented serious sacrifices for many families, especially since travel costs, clothing, increasingly expensive textbooks, and other incidental expenses had to be paid for, in addition to charges for tuition, room, and board. Dartmouth is not unique in listing in its admissions and financial-aid bulletin the availability of home-equity loans which permit parents "to tap up to 80 percent of the equity in their homes as an educational resource."

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College and university officials have often responded to complaints about rapidly rising tuition with claims that rising costs have made these increases necessary. Like so much that is said by educational institutions, this claim sounds plausible at first, especially when backed up by statistics, but ultimately it cannot stand up under scrutiny. Even if not a single price except tuition had changed anywhere in the entire economy, "costs" would still have risen, as costs are defined in academic discussion.

Whatever colleges and universities choose to spend their money on is called a cost. If they hire more administrators, or build more buildings to house them, or send the college president on more junkets, these are all additional costs. If they hire more research assistants for the faculty or more secretaries for the administrators, these are all costs. Doing more research, raising salaries, inviting more high-priced speakers to campus, and many other things also increase costs. What colleges and universities seek to insinuate—misleadingly—by saying that costs have gone up is that the cost of what they have always done is rising, necessitating an increase in tuition. But colleges and universities have been greatly expanding what they do—and, as long as they spend the rising tuition on something, that something will be called a cost.

Expanding bureaucracies have been one reason for rising costs—or, to put it more directly, it is one of the things on which colleges spend their increased revenues. From 1975 to 1985, for example, while student enrollment nationally rose by less than 10 percent, college professional support staffs increased by more than 60 percent. (By professional support staff is meant people whose jobs require degrees but who do not teach students.) At Stanford University, the president, vice presidents, and their staffs added up to 47 people in 1977, but this increased to 83 people by 1988. Colleges and universities have also created new campuses and student centers overseas. Stanford opened overseas student centers in Italy and France in 1960, Spain in 1968, Germany in 1975, England in 1984, Poland in 1986, Japan in 1989, and Chile in 1990. Nor are

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overseas campuses or student centers limited to a handful of elite institutions. Innumerable colleges have them, either singly or collectively in consortium arrangements. The University of Evansville, for example, has its own 55-acre campus in England and the University of Dallas has its own campus in Rome.

At the University of South Carolina, the president has spent as much as $879 a night for his hotel rooms while traveling and $7,000 in one year for chauffeur services. The university has also paid $350,000 in travel and salary to the widow of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, for teaching one class a week for three semesters. All of these are "costs." A federal investigation of "costs" which Stanford University charged against government research grants turned up $3,000 for a cedar-lined chest and $2,000 a month for flower arrangements, both at the home of Stanford President Donald Kennedy, as well as more than $180,000 charged as depreciation on a yacht privately donated to the university's athletic department. The taxpayers were also charged for part of the cost of a $17,500 wedding reception when Mr. Kennedy remarried in 1987.

While these odd examples are not intended to be typical, they do demonstrate the enormous elasticity of the concept of "cost," as used in the academic world—and hence its meaninglessness as a justification for tuition increases. A much more common cost item is professors' salaries, which rose faster than the rate of inflation, every year during the decade of the 1980's. Added to this is the normal tendency toward expansionism in organizations not checked by the competition of the marketplace and the grim realities of a bottom line. At Vassar College, the vice president for finance said: "Vassar's departments are consulted for projected costs for the following year. Usually included are proposals for new materials and projects." The college administration then "tries to allow as much departmental expansion as possible"—and this in turn drives up tuition.

As a comprehensive economic study of American colleges and universities concluded, "the cost of any institution is largely determined by the amount of revenue it can raise." This was said, not by a critic, but by a man described as "the supreme defender of higher education." In other words, it is the amount of money that colleges and universities can get—from tuition, endowment income, donations, etc.—which determines how much their spending or costs will go up, *not* the other way around, as they represent it to the public. To say that costs are going up is no more than to say that the additional intake is being spent, rather than hoarded.

When a college expands its range of expensive activities first, and then calls it "increased costs" later, when seeking more money from various sources, this tends not only to confuse the issue but also to erode the very concept of living within one's means. The financial problems of well-endowed Bowdoin College illustrate the process and the attitudes. Its own professors and administrators have blamed its ballooning deficits on a decade of expanding programs, jobs, and buildings. As the dean of the college put it:

> People would come forward with plans that were good ideas—and because it was a period in which we could afford to grow, we just said Yes without being very deliberate about it.

According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*:

> Many faculty members did not even know of Bowdoin's financial problems until last year, when they read about them in a newspaper, the Maine *Times*. Several administrators say they also were unaware of the magnitude of the problem until last year.

This situation was not unique to Bowdoin, or even to rich private colleges in general. A consultant looking into the finances of Oregon State University reached very similar conclusions: "It's amazing how much in a university, processes are added on and added on, and no one takes a critical look at it."

In short, when parents are being asked to draw on the equity in their homes to pay rising tuition, it is not simply to cover the increased cost of educating their children, but also to help underwrite the many new boondoggles thought up by faculty and administrators, operating with little sense of financial constraints. To quote an official of the U.S. Department of Education, many colleges "choose to increase tuition because they can get away with it." While colleges claim that the increased spending is to improve education, this official saw it as going into "the swelling of the ranks of vice presidents and deans" and to other costly endeavors which make little or no contribution to quality education, which is "not a function of money." The availability of federal grants and loans to help students meet rising tuition costs virtually ensures that those costs will rise. A college which kept tuition affordable could forfeit millions of dollars annually in federal money available to cover costs *over and above* what students can afford, according to a financial-aid formula.

ARGUMENTS have often been made that students are getting a good deal from college, because tuition does not cover the full costs of their education. Such statements are much more difficult to check than they might seem to be. First of all, education is not the only activity going on at research universities, and even at liberal-arts colleges, research is increasingly expected of the professors. This research is paid for not only by faculty grants but also by reduced teaching loads—which is to say, by hiring far more professors than were required before to teach the same number of courses. These additional costs

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may be carried on the books as instructional costs but they are in fact research costs. Almost anything can be treated as a cost of educating students—on paper. At the University of Texas, more than $11 million of student-fee payments were applied to paying for construction of a microelectronics research facility, located more than six miles away from the campus.

The research imperative has spread across all kinds of institutions and down the academic pecking order. Virtually everywhere, the education of undergraduates is a joint product, along with research and other activities. As any economist knows, there is no such thing as the average cost of producing a joint product—that is, there is no such thing as the average cost of producing pigskin, because it is produced jointly with bacon, ham, and pork chops. There is an average cost of producing a pig, but not its components, which cannot be produced separately.

Even if it were possible to separate out the cost of undergraduate education, there is no reason why tuition should cover it, since alumni and other donors contribute money for the express purpose of subsidizing education. Endowment funds often were contributed for the same purpose. When college and university administrators expand their empires by raising tuition, this is not necessarily due to the rising cost of education. Nor are the "extras" necessarily an enhancement of education, nor something reflecting student demand through the marketplace. In the public institutions, where most students go, it is largely a matter of adminstrators convincing legislators to contribute the taxpayers' money.

It may seem odd that college-admissions directors are under heavy pressure to enroll more students, if the colleges are losing money on each student enrolled, as academic administrators so often claim. When Dartmouth vice president Robert Field announced that the college was accepting more transfer students, in order to bring in more revenue, the *Dartmouth Review* asked editorially: "How can Field make money on new students when every time he raises tuition, he claims tuition pays for only half the cost of each student?" This probing question goes to the heart of the economic issue, and its answer depends upon *incremental* costs. Once a college is built and its dormitories and classroom buildings are in place, the additional or incremental costs of adding more students is relatively low, so long as their numbers do not exceed the existing capacity. Within those limits, adding more students may well bring in far more additional revenue than any additional costs they represent.

The claim by college administrators that tuition does not cover the average cost of a college education is both meaningless and misleading. It is meaningless because, as already noted, there is no such thing as the average cost of a joint product, and it is misleading because there is no more reason why tuition should cover all the costs of a college than there is for magazine subscriptions to cover all the costs of producing a magazine. Advertisers often pay most of the costs of producing a magazine or newspaper, each of which comprises joint products—journalistic writings and advertisements—just as academic institutions produce both teaching and research. No one believes that magazines are doing a favor to their subscribers by offering subscriptions at prices which do not cover the average cost of producing the magazine. Nor do magazines make any such sanctimonious claims.

It is commonplace in the ordinary business transactions of the marketplace for joint products to be sold simultaneously to different groups, no one of which pays enough to cover the total costs of the business. A professional baseball team not only sells tickets to those who enter its stadium; it also sells television and radio rights to broadcasters who cover the game, and rents out the stadium to others who use it for rock concerts, boxing matches, and other events while the team is on the road or during the off-season. If ticket prices for baseball games rose to exorbitant levels, it would be no answer to the fans to say that they were still not being charged enough to cover the total costs of the baseball club. Yet colleges and universities use this as an argument against students and their parents who complain about exorbitant tuition.

In the ordinary transactions of the marketplace, competition from rival producers limits how much a given business can charge its customers. In the academic world, however, *organized collusion* among some of the most expensive colleges has stripped the students and their parents of this consumer protection. Each spring, for 35 years, the Ivy League colleges, plus MIT, Amherst, Northwestern, and a dozen other colleges and universities, met to decide how much money they would charge, as a net price, to *each individual student*, out of more than 10,000 students who had applied to more than one institution in this cartel. The lists of students were compiled before the annual meetings, and officials from the various colleges decided how much money could be extracted from each individual, given parental income, bank-account balance, home equity, and other financial factors. Where their estimates differed, these differences were reconciled in the meetings and the student then received so-called "financial-aid" offers, which meant that the net cost of going to one college in the cartel would be the same as the net cost of going to another.

The U.S. Department of Justice began investigating these and other colleges in 1989. With a legal threat of antitrust prosecution by the government, and a class-action suit on behalf of students, hanging over this group of colleges, pend-

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ing the outcome of the investigation, Yale and Barnard dropped out of the meetings in 1990, and in 1991 the meetings were canceled.

A cartel or a monopoly maximizes its profit by charging not only a high price but also, if possible, a *different* price to different groups of customers, according to what the market will bear in each separate case. Seldom can most business cartels or monopolies carry this to the ultimate extreme of charging each individual customer what the traffic will bear, as the academic cartel does. But academic institutions are armed with more detailed financial information from financial-aid forms than most credit agencies require, and for decades have been comparing notes when setting their prices, in a way that would long ago have caused a business to be prosecuted for violation of the antitrust laws. In other respects, however, the colleges and universities use the same methods as business cartels or monopolies. Like monopolistic price discriminators in the commercial world, private colleges and universities set an unrealistically high list price and then offer varying discounts. In academia, this list price is called tuition and the discount is called "financial aid."

The widespread availability of financial aid—often received by more than half the students at the more expensive colleges—changes the whole nature of tuition. Back when scholarships were awarded to a needy fraction of the students, this was clearly a matter of philanthropy and reward for academic ability. Today, varying amounts of financial aid are awarded up and down the income scale, and very little of it has anything to do with the quality of the student's academic record or with philanthropy to the poor. Approximately two-thirds of the undergraduates at Harvard and four-fifths of those at Rice receive financial aid. The average family income of financial-aid recipients at Harvard in academic year 1990-91 was $45,000. These financial-aid recipients included more than 400 whose family incomes were above $70,000, of whom 64 came from families with incomes exceeding $100,000.

Harvard is not unique in this respect. At Marquette University, out of 119 students in the class of 1989-90 who came from families with incomes of $60,000 to $70,000 and who applied for financial aid, 71 were declared eligible for it, as were 74 out of 192 students from families with incomes above $70,000. Similar figures are common at other private colleges and universities. The president of MIT noted that financial-aid applicants at that institution "are distributed almost uniformly across the spectrum of family income." The percentage of applicants who receive aid typically varies by income level and so does the amount of the aid received, so that the net price actually charged is adjusted to the most that can be extracted from each applicant's family.

ORDINARILY, price discrimination does not work in a competitive marketplace, because those charged extortionate prices will be bid away by competitors, until the price is competed down to a level commensurate with the cost of producing whatever commodity or service is being sold. But this does not happen among high-priced colleges which engage in organized collusion. The picture is complicated somewhat by the fact that the term "financial aid" encompasses both paper discounts from tuitions listed in college catalogues and actual transfers of money—the great bulk of this money being government-provided or government-subsidized. Philanthropic aid also continues, enabling a needy fraction of students to cover their cost of living, as well as tuition. Fundamentally, however, college-provided "financial aid" is a method of producing a sliding scale of tuition charges, like ordinary price discrimination elsewhere—and like successful price discrimination elsewhere, it is a byproduct of collusion. For example, when one student found that the financial-aid packages offered by Brown University and by Yale were inadequate to enable him to attend either institution, his efforts to get an increase were complicated by the fact that "each could alter a package only after consulting with the other."

This collusion process has been made easier by the remarkable similarity of tuitions among those in the cartel—despite differences in urban or rural location, endowment income per student, local cost-of-living variations, the size of the student body over which the institutional overhead was spread, and other such economic considerations which normally lead to price differences. A Carnegie Foundation study found "widely different costs per student" among institutions. Yet in 1989-90, for example, the variation in tuition among the eight Ivy League colleges was less than 5 percent from the most expensive (Brown) to the least expensive (Cornell), even though Ivy League colleges are scattered from Manhattan to rural New Hampshire.

Officials of some colleges and universities admit not only to sharing information on financial-aid offers to specific students but also to sharing information on pending tuition increases and faculty salaries. This has all the appearance of a multidimensional "price-fixing system that OPEC might envy," as the *Wall Street Journal* characterized it—and is a clear violation of American antitrust laws when businessmen do such things.

The time, then, is long overdue to begin applying the same legal standards to academia as to everyone else—and for the media, donors, trustees, and the public to begin scrutinizing colleges and universities, and viewing their pious statements with the same skepticism they apply to self-serving statements from other institutions.

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Why Likud Lost—And Who Won

David Bar-Illan

HAD Israel voted its pocketbook in the June 23 elections, the Likud party, led by Yitzhak Shamir, would have won easily. For the fact was—a fact obscured by campaign rhetoric, the obsessive preoccupation with American loan guarantees, and the monthly scare figures of unemployment—that the Israeli economy had made remarkable progress in the six years of Shamir's premiership.

Indeed, within the last two of those six years, Israel had managed to house, feed, and clothe over 400,000 immigrants—more than a tenth of the state's Jewish population—from the former Soviet Union, and to employ over 60 percent of them. That this could happen while the Western world was enduring an economic slowdown made Likud's feat all the more impressive.

Furthermore, of the 6,000 scientists and research-and-development engineers who had arrived in Israel since the beginning of the current immigration wave in November 1989, more than half had found jobs in their own professions. Forty percent had joined the industrial sector, another 40 percent had been absorbed by institutes of higher learning, and 20 percent had been appointed to positions in government research institutions, research laboratories in hospitals, and technological colleges.

To be sure, this still left nearly 40 percent of the new immigrants unemployed. Yet even counting them, the nation's overall unemployment rate (11 percent), of which only half were hard-core job seekers, was no higher than in many Western countries. And in contrast to those countries, there were virtually no homeless in Israel, and no one was going hungry.

Nor was this all. By the time the election took place, inflation was clearly being curbed (the cost-of-living index for May was negative, something as rare in Israel as spring snow), and other economic indicators were just as encouraging. Thus, in March and April, mercantile exports were up 10 percent compared with the previous two months, and retail sales were 5 percent higher. Industrial production was back to the record high set in the pre-Gulf-War period of July-August 1990. Imports of investment goods rose a whopping 17 percent (including a 20-percent jump in imports of machinery and equipment).

Nor could these pre-election improvements be considered a fluke. In the preceding four years, Israel had chalked up a 20-percent growth rate. The 1991 rate was well over 6 percent (putting Israel fourth in the industrial world, after South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, and ahead of Japan, Germany, the U.S., and Great Britain). The gross domestic product (GDP), which approached $54.4 billion in 1991 (against $28 billion in 1986), was the highest in the nation's history. Israel also recorded a sharp decline in the trade deficit as a proportion of the balance of payments, and a decline in the relation of American aid to the GDP—from 10.7 percent in 1986 to 5 percent in 1991.

Given the recession in the countries to which 80 percent of Israel's exports were directed, and considering the $1.6 billion losses inflicted on the country by the Gulf War early in the year, the Israeli growth rate was well-nigh incredible.

The improvement was felt also on the individual level. From 1986 to 1991, the money supply rose by almost 90 percent, and savings went up to $13.2 billion, which amounted to 25 percent of the GDP, a record level, comparable to that of Germany. The 1991 turnover of the stock exchange was $12.3 billion, 23 percent of the GDP, close to that of the industrialized states. The number of small businesses employing fewer than 100 workers—the traditional backbone of modern economies—grew considerably. There was expanded investment from domestic sources—an indication of public confidence in the value of the shekel and the economy. Another such indication was the $1 billion returned to Israel by citizens who had been keeping their money overseas.

Since 1986, too, there had been a significant per-capita increase in the purchase of cars, television sets, VCR's, and air-conditioning units, as well as a precipitous rise in travel abroad. And—no trivial matter where daily life is concerned—there had been a dramatic improvement in the quality of telephone service: the waiting list for

DAVID BAR-ILLAN was recently named editor of the Jerusalem *Post*. His article, "The Patriot Smear & Its Progeny" (June), inaugurated our new Israel Watch department.

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telephones, a source of bitter jokes since the establishment of the state, had virtually been eliminated.

IN SPITE OF all this, the conventional wisdom, which even many in Likud began to believe, was that the economy was in a hopeless condition and that the absorption effort was a total disaster. The very same critics who two years earlier had blamed Shamir for unpreparedness, and had forecast thousands of homeless immigrants camping out on the streets, now blamed the government for overbuilding. They also blamed it for not providing immigrants with jobs. Had jobs been made available, they insisted, the immigration would not have begun dwindling, and the 200,000 immigrants once projected for 1992 would not have shrunk to the 60,000 expected this year.

Like all projections, however, these were at best educated guesses, as were the predictions in 1989 that if the Soviet Union's gates opened, only 50,000-100,000 Jews would want to come to Israel. When those estimates were proved wrong and the rate became 200,000 a year, the pendulum swung to euphoric expectations of a million-and-a-half newcomers within two or three years.

Yet the initial unexpected flood of immigrants was caused not by a sudden awakening of Zionist passions, or by the confident expectation of better material conditions, but by uncertainty about Soviet policy. Soviet Jews feared—not unreasonably—that a successful putsch would reverse Gorbachev's liberalization, or that the disintegration of the regime would beget pogroms and persecutions. But when it became clear that the freedom of Jews to emigrate would not be reversed, and that in the new climate entrepreneurs could thrive, many of the potential immigrants decided to wait and see. Of course, had Israel been able to secure a job for every cellist and petroleum engineer, more Jews would have come. But to expect such "*goldene medine*" opportunities anywhere today was to dream the impossible dream.

Not that the Shamir government's economic policies were all that they might have been: greater investments in infrastructure, faster auctioning of government-owned land, more intensive privatization, greater exposure to imports, and more tax reduction would have spurred the economy even more, with a concomitant rise in the number of jobs available to the new immigrants.

Nevertheless, the absorption process was undoubtedly succeeding. There was no better indication of this than the fact that only a few hundred immigrants had left the country. (By comparison, of the Soviet immigration of the 1970's, universally considered a spectacular success, about 10 percent—20,000 people—left, and that was one of the lowest rates of "defection" in the history of immigrations anywhere.)

To add to Likud's troubles, the public linked the alleged failure to attract more immigrants with Shamir's inability to secure the Bush administration's guarantees for $10 billion in bank loans. Had the administration's refusal been interpreted merely as an expression of hostility toward Israel, the voters might have rallied around Likud. But the general impression, abetted by a highly partisan press, was that Bush's policy was motivated by a desire to topple Shamir, and that another government would fare better by being "more flexible" on settlement policy.

Realizing, however, that recommending surrender to an American *diktat* might backfire, Labor, Meretz (the other opposition party of the Left), and much of the press launched a brilliant and a thoroughly effective campaign against the Shamir government's "wasteful expenditure of billions" on settlements in the "occupied" territories. Israel should stop building homes in the settlements, they declared, not because the Americans said so but because it would be best for Israel.

As it happens, government expenditures in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza in 1991—the year of greatest activity in these areas—amounted not to "billions" but to $315 million, less than 1 percent of Israel's budget. Moreover, it was not the "settlements" which were being subsidized but the people living in them. Had the same people decided to live in the Tel Aviv area, government expenditures on roads and infrastructure would have been, if anything, greater. And had all the settlers been persuaded to live in the Negev and Galilee, the costs would have increased, since the greater distance of these areas from employment opportunities would have necessitated still larger expenditures on roads and infrastructure. What is more, government housing subsidies in outlying areas of pre-1967 Israel are as high as they are in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.

AMAZINGLY, rather than defending its policies in these terms, Likud concentrated instead on trying to smear Labor's candidate, Yitzhak Rabin, by suggesting that he was unstable and a drunk. Yet Likud had been perfectly happy to have Rabin as Defense Minister for over five years in a national-unity government, during the major part of which he had served under Shamir's premiership. To aver now that he was unfit to be Prime Minister was as asinine as it was offensive to the public's intelligence.

Likud would have done better to paint Rabin as a front for a party which was in every respect far to the Left of him. For example, Rabin advocated a substantial reduction in taxes and drastically diminished government intervention in business activity. Nothing could be more contrary

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to Labor's centralizing philosophy. Yet Likud, once again grossly underestimating the electorate's capacity to follow a reasonable argument, failed to make a big issue of this discrepancy.

Similarly, on the issue of security, Likud permitted Labor to hide behind Rabin, whose hawkish reputation reassured many voters who would otherwise have been put off by the dovishness of his party. Indeed, with Rabin at the head of the ticket, the security argument, usually a strong point for the hawkish Likud, for once worked in Labor's favor. Thus, Labor used incidents like the murder of a fifteen-year-old-girl in a Tel Aviv suburb—incidents as endemic to the Middle East as drug-related killings are to Washington—to push its "territorial-compromise" position (it vowed in this instance to "get Gaza out of Tel Aviv").

Now, most Israelis still believe that the "land-for-peace" formula—a euphemism for a return to the pre-1967 lines—is suicidal, which is why Meretz, which advocates this policy, got only 10 percent of the vote. But about half of the Israeli Jewish population is now readier than in the past to consider "territorial compromise"—i.e., withdrawing from some of the territories taken in the Six-Day War of 1967.* The reason is not only that the *intifada* has taken its toll and eroded public resolve. It is also that most voters today are too young to remember the constant dread of terrorism and the fear for the country's survival of the pre-1967 days. Indeed, the Israeli media, and particularly television, commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Six-Day War, which occurred three weeks before the election, with self-flagellating reassessments whose conclusion was that the victory—hitherto seen as one of the great moments in the history of Israel and even of the Jewish people in general—had been an unmitigated disaster for the country.

As against this body of sentiment, Shamir's unflinching resolve never to yield so much as "one inch" of territory could no longer prevail. Likud was simply unable to convince today's electorate that Rabin's reassuring middle position—the forfeiture of the areas in the territories heavily populated by Arabs—is a political impossibility, and that withdrawal from a part of them will ineluctably lead to withdrawal from the rest and the eventual establishment of a new Palestinian state there. (A new Palestinian state is an outcome still overwhelmingly opposed by the Israeli public, and by Rabin himself, though favored by Meretz and—if not always openly—by a growing number of Laborites.)

Even so, Likud had so much to crow about in the area of defense that its failure to score more heavily on this issue was even more astonishing than its ineptitude in making the case for its economic achievements. After all, Israel's strategic position had been vastly improved under Shamir, and—thanks largely to a new tactic devised by Shamir's Defense Minister Moshe Arens and Chief of Staff Ehud Barak—the Israeli army had put the *intifada* on the run.**

While displaying no-nonsense toughness against Arab violence, Likud had also shown the requisite "flexibility" by entering into negotiations with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians, talks that had been set up according to Israel's prescription: they were direct, bilateral, and independent of international control. And a second track of multilateral talks, though still in an embryonic stage, had brought Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries to sit for the first time at the table with Israel.

With this record, victory at the polls should have been assured. But Likud could not overcome the disunity and the internecine feuding which so often afflict a party long in power. In the pre-election contest for the Knesset list, the Shamir-Arens wing of the party defeated Foreign Minister David Levy's candidates. Levy, a pompous mediocrity who had used his Moroccan origins to climb the ladder of politics, then accused his colleagues of ethnic discrimination. Instead of firing him for undermining and slandering the party, Shamir placated him yet again. But the damage was done. Likud's support among Israelis of Moroccan origin shrank considerably and Shamir appeared indecisive and weak.

The party also made the cardinal error of taking the Russian immigrants for granted. Assuming that victims of Communism would never vote for a left-wing party, Likud politically neglected them. Labor, on the other hand, did a good job of exploiting the natural resentments of new immigrants toward the ruling bureaucracy and the ingrained distrust all ex-Soviet citizens have for the party in power. They voted overwhelmingly for Labor.

BUT the two decisive factors in the Likud defeat had little to do with economic and defense policies or internal bickering. First of all, Shamir, convinced that Israel must

* Actually the proportion would seem to be less than half, since (excluding the Arab parties) a majority of the electorate voted for the Right-of-Center parties.

** The *intifada* of 1992, it should be noted, barely resembles the uprising that began in December 1987. Its main feature now is the activity of armed terrorist units which occasionally ambush Israeli vehicles but mostly torture and kill fellow Arabs who are allegedly collaborating with the Israelis. Responsible for the vast majority of Palestinian Arab casualties today, these gunmen have instituted a reign of terror throughout the territories. Faced with this new situation, Arens decided that instead of using the old (and often counterproductive) techniques of collective punishment, the army should concentrate on stopping the gunmen. He thus began sending specially trained squads to penetrate their strongholds and apprehend suspects. In the first six months of 1992, about 1,500 such gunmen were arrested, about twenty were killed, and scores came to army posts to surrender. It was by far the most successful tactic yet devised to combat the *intifada*.

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retain control of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza if it is to survive, always believed that this goal justified even the most egregious domestic compromises. Needing the support of the ultra-religious parties (the *haredim*) to stay in power, he gave in to their outrageous demands for subsidies. That Labor had promised to accommodate precisely these same demands to entice the *haredim* away from Likud was quickly forgotten. Shamir was blamed for coddling non-Zionist parties whose followers did not serve in the army and whose Knesset members—some of whom are under police investigation—were unabashedly extorting taxpayers' money for their projects and institutions. (One of the main reasons Tsomet quadrupled its strength in this election, going from two to eight seats in the Knesset, was that it was the only Right-of-Center party to attack the *haredim*.)

The most telling blow to Likud, however, was of its own creation. What became clear in the campaign was that only Rabin could defeat Likud. It was only his image as a security-conscious military man—a former general who, as Defense Minister in the early phase of the *intifada*, had been very tough in dealing with the uprising—that enabled voters who felt it was time for a change to take a chance on Labor. Without him, Labor's dovishness would have been an insuperable obstacle to victory. In fact, even with Rabin, Labor's victory was far from being the "decisive turn," let alone the landslide, described by the New York *Times* and other Western media. Had Likud retained just two more seats than it did (34 instead of 32), this, together with the combined forces of the right-wing and religious parties, would have given it a majority of 61, and Shamir would now be heading the government.

That Rabin had a glorious military record certainly helped in the establishment of his reputation. But what really gave him the stamp of a hawk who—as he himself put it—could "tame the doves" within his own party was the unreserved trust he had enjoyed as Defense Minister under Shamir. It was this trust which defeated Likud: not the government's record, not Shamir's alleged "zealotry," not the party's many campaign blunders, not the ganging-up of the media at home and abroad, and not the Bush administration's palpable hostility toward Shamir. In the most ironic twist in Israel's political history, Likud was beaten not by Labor but by one man—and a man for the creation of whose favorable image it had itself largely been responsible, Yitzhak Rabin.

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Europe: Miracle or Monster?

Paul Johnson

THE ratification, or not, of the Maastricht Treaty shaping the future of the European Community (EC) is a matter of profound importance not only for Europe itself but, in the long run, for the United States as well.

On June 18, 1992, the people of Ireland, in a referendum, accepted the Treaty by a majority of more than two-to-one. This was not surprising, for the Irish are among the biggest beneficiaries of the Community's transfer-payments system, getting six dollars out for every dollar they pay in; projected EC spending plans will give them a further $3,500 for every man, woman, and child in Ireland's 3,537,000 population. Despite this, 50 percent of them declined to vote at all, reflecting widespread fears that increasingly intrusive Community legislation would threaten the special status of the Catholic Church and, in particular, force Ireland to scrap its constitutional amendment which guarantees the right to life of the unborn child.

Moreover, in a referendum held two weeks earlier, on June 2, fears of their own led the Danes, in a high turnout, to vote "No," albeit by a narrow majority, in a referendum on Maastricht. Denmark, with a population of just over 5.1 million, is also one of the smaller members of the EC. But its negative vote was a catalyst of doubts felt in many other EC states. Polls taken since show that voters who are undecided about what they think of Maastricht outnumber those in favor in seven out of the ten other member-states. Only in the Netherlands, where 52 percent favor Maastricht, do the European enthusiasts have a comfortable majority of all voters.

Under the terms of the Treaty, it cannot come into effect until it has been ratified by all twelve member-states. Therefore, unless the Danes can be persuaded to reverse their vote, Maastricht is, strictly speaking, null, and the British government instantly withdrew parliamentary legislation ratifying the Treaty until the doubts are cleared up. In the meantime, a grand debate has begun on what kind of Europe should be brought into existence. Should it be a federation with a strong central authority, as Maastricht seems to suppose, or should it be a much looser confederation? It is vital that Americans follow this debate and, indeed, participate in it.

For Americans, as the first people to create a continent-wide union of states, have been there before, and they know how difficult it is. How to balance the desire for continuing local sovereignty against the need for an effective general government? What kind of government should this be, what powers should it have, and to what extent should it legislate for individual states? How should the answers to these questions be defined in constitutional language, and how strictly should that language be interpreted by the courts? Two centuries ago these matters were discussed, in speech and print, by one of the most gifted generations of public men ever to have controlled the destiny of a nation, and their magisterial debates ring with relevance even today—indeed, especially today.

Yet the United States evolved only through trial and error. The entity brought into existence by the Continental Congress, which declared its independence and fought and won a long war with Great Britain, was no more than a loose confederation. Like today's European union, it was a device to avoid internecine war. But it could not function indefinitely in that form—it would go either backward to individual sovereignty, or forward to true union. Even Thomas Jefferson, a lifelong upholder of limited government, states' rights, and strict construction, recognized that the dangers of falling apart were greater than the dangers presented by the dynamic of centralism. He wrote to Edmund Randolph in 1783:

> I find . . . the pride of independence taking deep and dangerous hold on the hearts of individual states. I know no danger so dreadful and so probable as that of internal contests. And I know no remedy so likely to prevent it as the strengthening of the band which connects us. We have substituted a Congress of deputies from every state to perform this task: but we have done nothing to enable them to enforce their decisions. What will be the case? They

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will not be enforced. The states will go to war with each other in defiance of Congress; one will call in France to her assistance; another Great Britain, and so we shall have all the wars of Europe brought to our doors.

Hence the federal Constitution was drawn up in 1787, was ratified, and came into effect in 1788-89. Yet the passionate debates which accompanied this process revealed that, in the view of most citizens, the centralizing process was now going *too* far, and would have to be qualified by libertarian guarantees. Thus the first Ten Amendments, or Bill of Rights, were enacted and ratified in 1791.

But even these back-and-forth shifts to find a viable median between center and periphery did not suffice. The late 1790's were dominated by the debate on the right of states to nullify federal law, a debate resumed in the early 1830's, and left unresolved on both occasions. Likewise, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the further Compromise of 1851 did not settle the claims of states to protect their own institutions from collective change, or to secede if they were threatened. Those claims had to be put to the test of the Civil War, which cost the lives of at least 620,000 combatants, nearly as many as in all the other wars America has fought combined. Nor did even this bloodletting end the debate, which continued through Reconstruction and the long reaction to it, right down to the civil-rights battles of the 1950's and 1960's.

Most Europeans, even well-educated statesmen from the *grandes écoles*, know little of this history and of the huge difficulties Americans have had to overcome in order to make federalism work. They are therefore unaware of the lessons they need to learn from America if they are to survive the tests they undoubtedly will face.

If anything, those tests will be far greater than the ones confronting America's founders and continuators. America's federal experience, it is true, was bedeviled by slavery and race, two factors which do not divide the Europeans. As against this, however, Americans had overwhelming compensatory advantages in building a continental federation: a common language and literature; a common political culture and law; for the most part a common religion; even shared inspirational texts, such as Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government*; and, not least, a common Anglo-Saxon tradition of pragmatism and compromise. They also had, in Great Britain, a common enemy, and no bitter memories of fratricidal conflict.

The Europeans have not a single one of these advantages. They are also working against a recent background in which other federations which did possess them have fared disastrously. To be sure, Europeans can and do brush aside the collapse of the Soviet Union, a sham and involuntary federation which had more of the characteristics of an old-style authoritarian empire. But the example of Yugoslavia, now disintegrating amid appalling savagery, is more difficult to dismiss: for it was, initially at least, a voluntary compact, and one with a common tongue. As for the Czechs and the Slovaks, now also moving backward from federation to confederation—or to outright separation—they too had many unifying advantages, but loss of local sovereignty has proved too strong a grievance.

Outside Europe, there have been innumerable postwar unions which, despite strong cómmon interests, have likewise ended in dissolution: East and West Pakistan, the Central African Federation, the Federation of the West Indies, the Federation of Malaysia, to name only four, all now defunct. Failed attempts to federate the Arab states are too numerous to mention. Federations which have survived, like the Trucial States in the Persian Gulf, are few and small-scale.

Indeed, the European Community as it currently functions sometimes reminds one of Dr. Johnson's comment on women preachers: "It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all." The resilience of nationalism at the end of the 20th century, in Europe as elsewhere, makes it remarkable that the European Community, which dates from the 1957 Treaty of Rome, can have grown and flourished for 35 years. That it has done so is due largely to the good sense, as well as the genius, of its architect, Jean Monnet (1888-1979), and to the modesty both of its initial aims and of the means used to pursue them.

Monnet's attempts to get advanced nations to cooperate on matters of mutual economic interest went back to 1919, and he persisted in them, with unrelenting courage, for the rest of a long life. Therein lay his genius. But Monnet had a background not only in the French civil service but in international banking and economics and in wartime diplomacy, and he saw the need to qualify Gallic logic with Anglo-Saxon pragmatism. Therein lay his good sense.

As head of France's postwar Commissariat du Plan, Monnet invented "indicative planning," a minimalist approach which used discussion and persuasion, rather than directives, to get capital, labor, and government departments to work together. In creating the European coal-steel pool and in projecting the future of a Common Market which would, he hoped, evolve eventually into a federal Europe, he stipulated that regulations should be few, confined to those absolutely necessary to make the concept work at all. To keep their numbers limited, he further insisted on employing as few bureaucrats as possible, believing in a proto-version of Parkinson's Law: "Rules expand to occupy the time of bureaucrats avail-

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able to formulate them." Although he was unable to persuade British governments, either Labor or Tory, to cooperate in his ventures, Monnet believed that he had nonetheless given those ventures the saving grace of a qualifying British dimension.

ALAS, however, there is another unifying tradition in Europe, a much older one, and it proved too strong, if not for Monnet, then for his successors. That tradition stresses centrality, uniformity, and *réglementation.*

Europe, as an entity, was the offspring of the marriage between the culture of ancient Greece and Rome and the morality of Judeo-Christianity. It has, therefore—or so visionaries and imperialists have long argued—a natural disposition toward a common system of law and government. The Roman empire itself, both in its original and its Byzantine version, and in the attempts to resurrect it by Carolingians and Hohenstaufen and even by triumphalist canon lawyers and pontiffs from the 11th to the 14th centuries, tried to turn this disposition into solid reality. So, in the 16th century, did the Hapsburgs, using a combination of a network of dynastic marriages, Spanish-American gold and silver, and the Counter-Reformation.

From early modern times onward, this centralizing aspiration was resumed by whichever nation-state was perceived to be most powerful and thus in a position to impose its own version of unity by armies, bureaucrats, and the extension of its legal system. France, as the most populous nation, took the lead. In the late 16th century, Henry IV's great minister, the Duc de Sully, had a grand design for a united Christian European Republic of fifteen states. This was to be balanced, on the Greek analogy, by an international Amphictyonic Assembly. But it is significant that Sully's plan was preceded by a thorough reform and modernization of the French bureaucracy, the instrument which was to bring the federation into being.

Such French visions were the background to France's military efforts to dominate Europe, from Louis XIV onward. Napoleon I, by recreating the dimensions of the Carolingian empire through an amalgamation of conquest and client states, and by imposing his own code of law and his own trading area through the Continental system, came close to succeeding.

With the relative decline of France later in the 19th century, the Germans next took the lead, encouraged by the teachings of Fichte and Hegel that a German epoch in European and world affairs was dawning. If Germany and Austria had won World War I, Germanic military and economic paramountcy would have been the outcome. Adolf Hitler, whose Third Reich controlled virtually all of Europe by 1941, had elaborate plans for a postwar continental New Order which, while embodying his own obsessions with the Aryan race and *Kultur,* also partook of this long unifying tradition. So, too, it could be argued, did Stalin's abortive attempt to dominate postwar Europe, inspired as it ultimately was by Hegel's disciple, Karl Marx, but using class rather than race as the compulsive force.

These attempts to dragoon Europe into unity, or impose a centralizing hegemony upon it, ended in wars, the most destructive of which left the Continent in 1945 prostrate and impotent, its destinies for the first time in the hands of non-European powers, the U.S. and the USSR. From this nadir in its fortunes, the idea of a new Europe sprang: a Europe which would abolish its civil wars, and end its repeated suicide attempts, by moving toward a negotiated, voluntary, democratic union. This was Monnet's idea, and it seemed, certainly in its origins, to offer a viable and welcome alternative to all the failed compulsory schemes of the past.

In addition to its modesty of means, the idea was marked by two further characteristics. First, the union was non-military. The original six nations which formed the Community—West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg—did sign a treaty to create a "European Army" (the EDC) in May 1952, but when the French parliament refused to ratify it in August 1954, the idea collapsed. The military dimension of Europe was instead supplied by NATO, whose members included such nonparticipants in the Community as Britain, which did not join until 1972; Norway, which has yet to join; Turkey, which has been refused admission; Canada; and, above all, the United States, which for decades continued to provide Europe's defensive shield.

That shield, by definition, stopped short at the Iron Curtain; and so did America's parallel efforts to revitalize Europe's economy via the Marshall Plan, in which Stalin would not allow Russia or its satellites to participate. Hence the second characteristic of the burgeoning Community: it was capitalist. This too was very much to Monnet's taste. His whole faith rested in the wealth-creating properties of free enterprise, and even his "indicative planning" was to be conducted with the lightest of touches, becoming progressively less perceptible as the organization matured. His object, indeed, was to achieve what he called "perfect competition," when all the obstacles presented by chauvinism, protectionism, and bureaucratic intransigence would be removed. Had Monnet's original aims and methodology been maintained, the Community would now be entering—with the collapse of collectivism to the East—its Golden Age, a cynosure of the whole world as the way to bring about a true multinational market economy.

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But Monnet's aims were distorted and perverted. There were many reasons for this. The first was the need, in order to bring about a Community at all, to strike a crude, unspoken, but fundamental bargain between France and Germany, the two largest members and former hereditary enemies. German industry needed access to all Community markets, including France's highly protected one. France was prepared to grant this, provided Germany financed, through agricultural-support payments, the transformation of France from a predominantly peasant economy to a predominantly industrialized one.

The bargain, struck in the 1957 Treaty of Rome, took the form of the notorious Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which was, is, and will remain the greatest single barrier to the integration of the Community into a global free-trading, competitive system. By deliberately subsidizing the inefficient, CAP made nonsense of "perfect competition." And by introducing the principle of support payments on a permanent basis, it automatically made the Community an expensive institution, encouraging every other industry or interest, threatened or not, to demand subsidies and so raise further the Community's costs. Worse, CAP made it necessary to create a substantial bureaucracy to process and arbitrate these demands, and to write the expanding regulations needed to administer the system. Thus did Monnet's small bureaucratic machine, which was supposed to contract as anti-competitive regulations were scrapped, become a "transfer-payments trough" into which a growing number of snouts were thrust.

The growth of the bureaucracy and of its subsidizing function distorted the constitutional arrangements as well. The three original bodies—the European Coal and Steel Community (1952), the European Atomic Energy Community or Euratom (1957), and the European Economic Community, which functioned from January 1, 1958—were merged into the present European Community in 1967. The EC, whose headquarters are in Brussels, consisted of five elements: a European investment bank; a Court of Justice; a European parliament, originally appointed but now directly elected; a Council of Ministers, drawn from the member-states; and a permanent European Commission of civil servants.

There was here a confusion of ideas, which has become more impenetrable as the years have passed but which might have been avoided if the architects had studied the American precedent and laid down a clear separation of powers among legislature, judiciary, and executive. In the absence of these distinctions, in the absence indeed of an overriding constitutional document, the parliament has totally failed, so far, to become the equivalent of the American Congress—the fountainhead of law and finance—and has remained primarily a talking-shop. Nor has the Court of Justice taken on the role of validating the constitutionality of Community legislation: it has simply attempted to impose that legislation on the judicial systems of member-states. Finally, the Council of Ministers has failed to emerge as a true executive, instead remaining merely the conduit through which member-governments transmit their agreements or disagreements.

The confusion, therefore, was produced by a vacuum of power; and, nature abhorring such things, it has been filled by the one body which is always on the spot, permanent, coherent, and strongly motivated—the Commission of civil servants. This would be bad enough in itself, with the all-powerful Brussels *commissaires* evoking distant echoes of Sully's or Louis XIV's *intendants*, Napoleon's *préfets*, and even Hitler's *Gauleiters* and Stalin's commissars: symbols of the way in which unification is slipping back into the authoritarian, compulsory mode of the past.

But the triumph of the bureaucrats has become still more oppressive as a result of the conjunction of three other factors. The first is the way in which Monnet's policy of "perfect competition" has been inverted—rather as Marx inverted Hegel's dialectic—to transform it from a device for scrapping regulations into one for imposing them. Competition is now an excuse for Community bureaucrats to intervene in virtually every operation of industry, commerce, distribution, banking, and finance. Not only, for instance, must the monopoly legislation of individual states be "harmonized" with Community policy, but the Commission has the right to supervise compliance with both sets of criteria and use either or both to veto proposed mergers. The axle weights of trucks, the financial and shareholding structures of newspapers and TV groups, the kind of apples a farmer may grow in Herefordshire or Normandy, the size and metallic composition of paper clips, the way in which salmon should be smoked—these and countless other matters have been drawn into the bureaucratic net. Plans are well advanced to use spy satellites to monitor compliance by member-states with Brussels directives, especially in crop arrangements.

The second factor conducing to greater bureaucratic oppression is the increasing use of Community regulations to achieve social objectives. Here we must introduce the man who personifies the aggressive Brussels afflatus, the sixty-seven-year-old Jacques Delors, who has served two terms as president of the Commission, seeks an unprecedented third, and hopes eventually to become the first president of a United Europe—a bureaucratic George Washington, in short.

Delors, who has been Minister of Finance in

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the Mitterrand government, came up through the French central-banking and planning mechanism and is, by career and conviction, an unrepentant, unreconstructed Socialist of the most rigorous kind. As Marxist theory has disintegrated with the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, Delors, like many others on the Left, has seized upon the expanding theory of rights as a substitute weapon to force capitalism to bow to "social justice." Workers' rights, women's rights, children's rights, the rights of minorities, the old, the sick, the young, the handicapped—all these, and others, are grist to the Brussels bureaucratic mill and emerge from its regulatory conveyor belt. A salient part of the original Maastricht Treaty, which Britain refused to sign, is Delors's masterpiece, the Social Charter, which lays down in great detail the rules with which employers must comply, beginning with a maximum work week.

A third regulatory element on which the Brussels machine has eagerly seized is the increasing obsession of the educated middle class, in all advanced countries, with protecting health and the environment. All countries now legislate in this field, to some extent: the Community takes the highest common factor in such codes and applies it *a fortiori*. Pollution levels; water purity; the quality of beaches; afforestation; the ingredients, manufacture, storing, nomenclature, and labeling of cheeses; what birds you may or may not shoot and when; the *arcanae* of the abattoir; the right of access to an abortion clinic; the use and abuse of drugs, cosmetics, suntan oil; the future of boar-hunting in Gascony, bullfighting in Spain, stag-hunting in Somerset—these and thousands of other topics are now or shortly will be the subject of furious and self-righteous Brussels activity.

Needless to say, much of this legislation is the result of horsetrading, of a crudeness that would raise a blush on the cheek of even the most hardened U.S. Congressman. Hence, anomalies abound. The Commission, for instance, has produced the most draconian regulations to ban tobacco advertising. These involve taking down 150-year-old signs on tobacconists' shops, some of them classified as ancient monuments—if cigar-store Indians existed in Europe, they would be grievously unlawful—and advertising restrictions on the media which will hit publishers and TV networks severely and, in particular, U.S.- and British-owned agencies. Such regulations are being pressed with great ferocity by the Brussels Health Commissioner, the Greek Socialist Madame Papandreou, regardless of the fact that some member-states run tobacco monopolies (which remain untouched) *and* that the Greek tobacco industry is subsidized by the Community to the extent of over $1 billion a year. Since the Turks are not members, their tobacco is banned entirely, and selling Turkish cigarettes is now illegal in EC countries—a move which has brought an eloquent cry of outrage from at least one European, the playwright and former Angry Young Man, John Osborne.

These rising torrents of Community regulation, which must increasingly be incorporated into the national legislation of member-states and upheld in their courts, evoke radically different responses north and south of a line which runs along the English Channel, through the south of the Low Countries, and down to the Alps. It is in many ways equivalent to the sectionalism which, in the early days of American federalism, distinguished New England from the South, and both from the West. We are dealing, in other words, with a clash of cultures.

Broadly speaking, Mediterranean Europe is Catholic, Northern Europe Protestant. This different formation expresses itself in many ways, notably in attitudes toward the law. The French, for instance, are a highly regulated people, now more so than ever. A recent report to their Prime Minister, Pierre Bérégovy, revealed that, by the end of last year, the country had passed 109,500 laws and state decrees—a world record. On examination, however, many of these turn out to be laws reinforcing earlier laws which have been evaded, defied, or simply ignored. The French do not object to the *principle* of overregulation, but in practice, when particular interests are threatened, well-organized groups, from farmers to students, simply erect barricades and block roads until the authorities back off. It is not unusual, for instance, for French farmers to seize truckloads of imported live lambs from Britain or Spain—all perfectly legal imports, under Community regulations—and incinerate the lot, while the French gendarmerie watches impassively.

Italy, too, delights in legislative hyperactivity, determining, in theory at least, the minutest details of all economic activities. But earlier this year, the official charged with coordinating anti-Mafia activities admitted that in many parts of the country, particularly the South, Sicily, and Sardinia, the writ of the government, let alone that of Brussels, simply does not run (he has since been murdered). The situation in Greece, the most corrupt European country this side of the old Iron Curtain, is in some ways even worse.

By contrast, the Northern states have a tradition of enacting fewer laws, but obeying them. In Denmark, for instance, Community laws and directives are rigorously enforced by local authorities; the widespread feeling there that other members do not penalize offenders—that the EC is moving toward a two-tier moral system—is one reason for the Danish "No" vote. The Dutch, Germans, and British feel the same.

According to a recent Commission report, during the first half of 1991 Britain had the worst

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record of the twelve in the number of attempted frauds against Value Added Tax and customs regulations. British officials retort indignantly that the figures reflect merely the diligence with which national authorities investigate crime. In Italy, where such frauds are almost universal, only eight cases were uncovered; in Greece, a derisory two. A member of the British government, who has property in France, reported that when he inquired of a neighboring farmer about compliance with EC regulations, he got the bland reply: "Community laws are for the British to obey. They are not for the French."

There is a widespread feeling, indeed, that the Community, a French concept, serves primarily to advance French interests. France has been by far the largest beneficiary of the CAP. Though one of the wealthier members, it is a net recipient of EC funds. Frenchmen dominate the Brussels bureaucracy, and move to and fro with ease between their national machine and that in Brussels. Delors's chief of staff, Pascal Lamy, having played a major role in devising the scheme for European monetary union which lies at the heart of the Maastricht Treaty, has recently returned to Paris as head of the French Treasury. Delors himself is expected to resume his French political hat, perhaps as Prime Minister, when it suits his ambitions and France's convenience.

Such men see no conflict of loyalties, since they regard it as axiomatic that the interests of the Community are identical with those of France. The French Minister of Justice, with no sense of irony or awareness of any contradiction in his words, recently threatened: "French sovereignty will not permit any obstacle to the progress toward European unity." It is such views which lead critics more and more frequently to use the word "Napoleonic," applying it in particular to Delors himself. There are certainly times when he gives a more-than-passable imitation of one of Bonaparte's military governors.

INDEED, the greatest single defect of the EC is the almost total absence of a democratic dimension. No one who matters in Brussels is elected or answerable. Moreover, the Commission operates in an impenetrable mist of bureaucratic jargon—"subsidiarity," one of its key terms, defies definition.

One reason for the success of federalism in the United States is that, throughout the 1780's, the issues at stake were presented with incomparable clarity, the arguments for and against were exhaustively deployed at every political level and in newspapers, and the number of those who participated directly in the debates and the ratification process constituted a sizable part of the entire nation. Conversely, when the U.S. federation broke down in 1861 with the secession of the South, that move was decided by the vote of a mere 697 (out of a mere 854) men at state conventions, all of them appointed by legislatures; so 697, none directly elected, decided the fate of nine million. The determining oligarchy in Europe is, if anything, smaller, and composed entirely of professional politicians and officials.

By contrast to America in the 1780's, the people of Europe are moving toward federation as if in a trance. It is unlikely that one in 10,000 has even glanced at the Maastricht Treaty, which among other things introduces a common currency and central bank. Copies of it are hard to come by and there is even a dispute over what is the correct English text. The Danish government, while campaigning for a "Yes" vote, took the democratic step of printing and distributing free no fewer than 300,000 copies, so that virtually every family in the country had one: the result was "No."

The right response to the uncertainty triggered by the Danish vote would therefore be to seize the opportunity for a thorough democratization of the Community's procedures. We must hope this now takes place. But the likelihood is that any changes will be cosmetic. A fundamental reconstruction would inevitably work against France's interests, and in that event France would leave the Community and it would collapse. If, however, the Community simply carries on in its blind, bureaucratic way, a far more serious—and possibly violent—crisis will develop. It is as if, like Tennyson's Kraken, the monster of European anarchy and force, sleeping peacefully since 1945 beneath the deep waters of prosperity and civilization, were beginning to stir.

The Northern members will not indefinitely tolerate the corrupt, unequal, and partial application of the Community's laws. Yet how are they to be fully imposed on the South? No one knows. The chances are that in the end the real resistance will come from Germany, by far the largest net contributor to EC funds. Indeed, since the Danish vote, polls in Germany have been running four- or five-to-one against the Community. The Germans fear that Maastricht will deprive them of their "beautiful strong Deutschmark," as they call it, and give them a potentially worthless Eurocurrency in exchange. The Community was designed in large part to anchor the Germans irrevocably in a peaceful, supernational European system. But it is proving irksome to them as they have become stronger and increasingly independent-minded, and they may soon feel they have outgrown it. If Germany breaks free, then the Kraken may awake in earnest.

There is a further, global danger in the perpetuation and growth of the present Community ethos. All-powerful internal bureaucracies are invariably associated with high external tariffs and all the other mercantilist apparatus of protection. The United States' struggle with the EC over ag-

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riculture is only one aspect of a much wider problem. The world is already drifting into three huge trading systems—the Americas, East Asia, and Europe. There is no doubt that the French, and the bulk of the Brussels machine, see the EC as an internal free-trading area, surrounded by a high protective wall—Fortress Europe. If the French determine the European pattern, then the Big Three will emerge as fiercely antagonistic, repelling one another's trade and fostering their own. The scene would be set for the greatest trade wars the world has ever known—and history teaches that trade wars lead to real ones. We could well face the nightmare of that tripartite world, engaged in perpetual warfare, foreseen in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four.*

There is, however, an alternative vision, and it may be that the corrective administered by the Danes will promote it. The British, since they have joined the Community, have seen it, ideally, not as inward-looking but as outward-looking: not as a Fortress but as an Open City. They are anxious that it expand not so much vertically, into a tightly integrated superstate of its existing members, but horizontally, to take in new ones: initially Sweden, Norway, Austria, and Switzerland, eventually Eastern Europe and possibly even Russia itself. They want to make Community aims wholly compatible with the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, so that the EC maintains a low and diminishing external tariff wall.

Assuming the Americas and East Asia follow suit, the Big Three could then become complementary rather than nakedly competitive, and in time merge into one global trading system. Then, in the very long term—perhaps the second half of the 21st century—the European federal experiment, in conjunction with the United States, might become the nucleus of a worldwide experiment along the same lines.

This is indeed a grand, even a grandiose vision. It certainly will not become reality unless Europe proceeds step by step, in a pragmatic manner, learning from its mistakes, and taking its electorates wholly into its confidence. In short, to survive, to avoid destroying the European idea, the Community must cease to be a bureaucratic-driven entity and become—like America before it—a democratic one, a Community "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

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Joseph Alsop & the WASP Ascendancy

Joseph Epstein

AT VARIOUS moments in his long career as a journalist in Washington, Joseph Wright Alsop must have thought to liken himself to Henry Adams. But even if he did not, on the dust jacket of his posthumously published memoirs, *"I've Seen the Best of It,"** which in late-life illness he produced with the help of the journalist Adam Platt, his publishers now do it for him. Perhaps the temptation could not be resisted. Both Adams and Alsop were set by birth above the ruck of grubby politics, and yet at the same time both were endlessly fascinated by them. In fact, Alsop was neither so intelligent nor so well-born as Adams—he "of ancient presidential race," as Henry James jokingly called him—with neither so deep nor so thoroughly soured a mind. Yet, during certain historical moments, Joseph Alsop, even though assigned by his profession to the sidelines, had had his innings.

By birth Alsop was a member of what remained of the patrician tradition in American public life—a tradition, to be sure, already much diminished and attenuated by the time he came to it in his adulthood in the early 1930's. No more argument need be made for this attenuation than that Alsop was a workaday journalist and columnist who wrote for a living and who at the end of his life claimed to have knocked out close to a thousand words a day since beginning in 1932 as a newspaper reporter. For journalism, by its nature, speaks to descent in the social scale, at least for the well-born. One can be a patrician and one can be a journalist, but when the two words are placed together—thus: patrician journalist—they seem to want to resist juxtaposition, perhaps out of fear of forming an oxymoron.

Henry Adams was himself for a spell—between 1868 and 1873—a political journalist, but a journalist in the service of reform, publishing articles on the civil service, the gold conspiracy, and other matters of public policy and finance. Yet all this was distanced and quite grand, entailing nothing so dreary or sweaty as earning money or sucking up to powerful politicians. Joseph Alsop, by contrast, was truly what used to be called "working press." He began writing feature articles for the old New York *Herald-Tribune*, of sacred memory, and before long went on to become one of that paper's main men in Washington and subsequently an important American columnist.

Yet even Alsop's initiation into journalism—downward mobility though it may have represented—was made possible by his social connections. In *"I've Seen the Best of It,"* Alsop recounts how, around the time of his graduation from Harvard, his family met over the problem of "what to do with Joe." His father concluded that Joe had no head for business. Law school was mentioned, but as an undergraduate Joe had had a quiet and not altogether enviable reputation as a fairly industrious drinking man at the Porcellian Club (the best, socially, that Harvard had to offer), and it was feared that three years at Harvard Law might turn him from a heavy social into a permanently serious drinker. But since Joe wrote fluent letters to his grandmother, the family, following her lead, decided to get in touch with "nice Helen Reid," whose husband Ogden then owned the *Herald-Tribune*. No sooner said than done.

This was at a time, the early 1930's, when not many university graduates worked as reporters on newspapers; and as for people of Joseph Alsop's social class, what they chiefly had to do with newspapers was to keep their names out of them or, sometimes, own them. What, precisely, was Alsop's social class? "I am," he says of himself, "by way of being a very minor member of the ever-diminishing group of survivors of the WASP ascendancy." Those capital letters, of course, stand for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, but behind them stands a good deal more: a concatenation of genealogies, social relationships, financial arrangements, and institutional affiliations which, in their interconnections, and in their preponderant spirit of taking care of one's own, could make city hall in Chicago under the late Mayor Daley look like the agora in 5th-century Athens.

Alsop's father had, along with family money, a 700-acre farm in Connecticut, near the town of Avon, south of Hartford. But Joe Alsop's true sociopolitical clout came from his mother, whose own mother was a younger sister of Theodore Roosevelt. Two of his mother's first cousins, then, were Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife (as I suppose

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one must now add for the benefit of the young) of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Alice Roosevelt Longworth, the closest Washington has ever come to having a powerful social hostess whose wit had real bite. When, for example, Alsop made the mistake of telling his cousin Alice that Wendell Willkie's Republican support in the 1940 presidential election came from the grass roots, she replied, "Yes, from the grass roots of 10,000 country clubs."

ALSOP, in his memoirs, never gainsays the importance of his birth. He allows that his has been "a very lucky" life, and that a substantial part of his good luck came through being (again) "a minor member of this now-vanishing group, the WASP ascendancy." The truth is that Alsop was one of those men who, through energy and ambition, would have succeeded in spite of being born with every advantage. At the same time, those advantages were quite real; they formed not only Alsop's character but his expectations, and the way they bore on his career forms much the most impressive material in his memoirs.

The Slavicist Roman Jakobson, in attempting to dissuade Harvard from hiring Vladimir Nabokov for its Russian department, remarked that Nabokov's distinction as a writer did not necessarily fit him for teaching. "Are we next to hire an elephant to be professor of zoology?" Jakobson asked. The answer, one would have thought, would be yes, if the elephant really knows his subject. Joseph Alsop, though himself a WASP in high standing, turns out to be an excellent WASP-ographer. He is very good on WASP linguistics (always prefer the older name or word for the thing named); WASP haberdashery (London for suits and shoes); furniture (it was a certain kind of beeswax that gave WASP homes their distinctive smell); cookery (fresh and lots of it, always prepared by hired help); ways of handling money ("Money was the true preoccupation. Money was the source of the ascendancy's authority"); snobberies (even the youthful Eleanor Roosevelt, he alleges, was not above anti-Semitism); and prejudices (against modern art, learning, and bookishness generally: Endicott Peabody, the headmaster of Groton, promised Alsop's mother that he would do his best to knock the boy's precocious reading habit out of him).

To the manor born, Alsop is by social manners never bored; and he fills in all the fine little distinctions and discriminations by which the exclusionary subculture of his upbringing lived and finally died. He has a good sense of that culture's strengths (decisiveness, and a willingness to devote oneself selflessly to the country and to institutions generally) and weaknesses (a narrowness of outlook that often kills sympathy). He avers, rightly I suspect, that, without the collapse of WASP culture—whose onset he dates to the Depression, which "totally demoralized most of its members"—ethnic groups would still be excluded from many major institutions in the United States today. At the same time, without sentimentalizing WASP culture, Alsop was entirely comfortable in it. In his last years, dying of lung cancer, he claimed that his idea of heaven was still to be well dressed at an outdoor New England wedding. Joseph Alsop, it must be understood, was a snob: true, a snob who thoroughly understood snobbery and quite properly deplored its destructive results, but for all that still a snob. To take up Roman Jakobson's trope, knowing zoology does not cause the elephant to lose its trunk and large ears.

If social rank has its privileges, the privileged, when drawing too heavily on their social account, can themselves come off as pretty rank. So must Alsop have seemed in the city room of the *Herald-Tribune*, where, as he says, Stanley Walker, the paper's managing editor, referred to him as "a perfect example of Republican inbreeding." In recounting his early days on the paper, Alsop tells of standing on a picket line for Heywood Broun's American Newspaper Guild on a cold winter's night got up in a heavy (and no doubt expensive) raccoon coat. He tends to represent himself, during those newspaper days in New York, as something of a charming upper-class anomaly, and the only thing in dispute in the description is the word "charming." Richard Kluger, in *The Paper* (1986), a history of the *Herald-Tribune*, tells rather a different story. His account features an overdressed, rich, fat boy—Alsop, who was short, in those days weighed in at well over 200 pounds—who read Proust at his desk, peremptorily called "Boy" when he needed a pencil or anything else, and was said not to bother cashing his paychecks. Outside of the office he lived handsomely, keeping in his charge a Japanese houseboy named Buto whose wife served as his cook. All this would probably have been insuperable had Alsop not been good at his job—which he was. He wrote easily, he was not in the least daunted in interrogating important people—by his social lights, they were not all that important—and he turned in excellent copy.

Alsop's big break came when he was sent to do feature pieces about the Lindbergh kidnapping case. He acquitted himself well and this led, in 1935, to a transfer to the paper's Washington bureau. In the 1930's the WASP spirit still prevailed in Washington, and so the city was a perfect assignment. His cousin Eleanor was then First Lady, and his social connections among the Ivy League brain-trusters whom cousin Franklin had brought to the White House did not hurt, either.

SNOBBERY in Washington takes funny forms. In that Southern town, birth and breeding are all very well, and it is surely nicer to have them than not; intelligence comes

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in handy, too; but nothing is so nice or so handy as crude old-fashioned power. Power it is that makes people in Washington vibrate and the city hum.

Alsop tells, for example, that at his own dinner parties he used to stick with the old English upper-class custom of men and women separating for half an hour of talk after the last course had been cleared, until Katharine Graham, the publisher of the Washington *Post*, told him that, unless he knocked this little ritual off, she would cease to dine in his house. Alsop reports that since her friendship meant a great deal to him, he did indeed knock it off. But one wonders what he would have done if someone with less power than the publisher of the Washington *Post* had cornered him on the subject. (Averell Harriman, Alsop reports, "insisted on this [same] ritual until the day he died.")

From the outset, Alsop fitted in nicely in Washington, owing not least to his connections. "You know, Alsop," Arthur Krock, then chief of the New York *Times* Washington bureau, told him, "the first thing you have to realize is that in Washington newspapermen have no place at table." But then no other newspaperman could claim a relative in the White House or another relative who was as strong an ally as Alice Roosevelt Longworth. "Besides a few columnists," he reports in his memoirs, "I was the only reporter I can recall who frequented Dining-Out Washington." Dining-Out Washington included such social matriarchs as Mrs. Longworth, Mrs. William Eustis, Mrs. Dwight Davis, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bliss, whose Dunbarton Oaks home is today a famous center of Byzantine studies.

In his depiction of Dining-Out Washington, Alsop is a good deal less like Henry Adams than like the Duc de Saint-Simon, that fastidious chronicler of magnificence and petty social distinctions at the court of the Sun King. Describing the food at Mrs. Longworth's table, Alsop reminds one of the little Duc on Louis XIV's gargantuan dinners. Whether dilating on the delights of terrapin eggs floating in rich sauces, the four-day soak of Virginia hams in the tubs of guest bathrooms where the water was changed twice daily, or the picking and preparation of the tenderest young vegetables for parties of 40 or more, Alsop, whose weight went up from 215 to 245 pounds in his early years covering Washington, takes, one senses, more than a literary interest in his subject:

> To these basics were added delicacies: shad in season, not boned but so slowly cooked in a sealed container that the bones melted, giving it ten times the taste of the flannel-like fish we get today; shad roe in mountains; soft-shell crabs; oyster crabs, which are tiny parasite crabs that inhabit oysters and have the tastes of both animals, not exactly in mountains because they were too expensive, but as a recurrent prize dish; in the autumn, turkey broilers (meaning specially fed, very young turkeys that were literally small enough to split and broil), reed birds, the pride of Southern houses; all sorts of game as well as guinea hen; then, too, there were the game birds one sees no more like plovers and wild turkey; and there was, above all, terrapin in season.

THROUGHOUT these memoirs Alsop shows, as Henry James once remarked apropos of Henry Adams, "a surviving capacity to be very well taken care of." One takes away from the book mental snapshots of a man being trundled about in rickshaws, always keen for and ever critical of his vittles, with many houseboys to see after his personal needs, interested in clothes, enjoying his booze, with cases of superior champagne laid in the basements of splendid houses. The one sensual element left out is the sexual, which in memoirs not otherwise notable for their discretion, is conspicuous by its absence.

On the question of writing about one's sex life, I have always been greatly impressed by a brief passage near the end of J.R. Ackerley's memoir, *My Father and Myself*. There Ackerley, after recounting his travails as a cruising homosexual with a taste for what used to be called "rough trade" that led him into all sorts of ghastly scrapes, tells how acquiring a dog, an Alsatian bitch hound, provided him with what he felt he had all along been seeking in the young men he used to pick up. This, Ackerley claims, was what "I had never found in my sexual life, constant, single-hearted, incorruptible, uncritical devotion." And then, after setting all this out, he remarks, "One of my friends, puzzled by the sudden change in my ways, asked me whether I had sexual intercourse with her [the dog]." The answer, it turns out, is no, but, given the nature of Ackerley's book, the question is not an inappropriate one. The moral for writers, I take this passage to imply, is that they must answer all questions that their work raises, not to mention some that silence itself can raise.

Alsop speaks not at all about the sexual side of his life, except to announce that, at the age of fifty, he proposed marriage to Susan Mary Patten, the widow of a recently deceased school friend.

> I wrote her from the [1960 Democratic] convention in Los Angeles, proposing that she form a new partnership—with me, headquartered in Washington. She came to the capital shortly after the inauguration [of John F. Kennedy] to make her decision, and, fortunately for me, it was a favorable one.

In her own memoirs, Susan Mary Alsop does not say much about her marriage to Joseph Alsop, except to note that he was a good stepfather, taking pains to teach Latin to her two children from her earlier marriage. What we have here, from all appearances, is a marriage of convenience, which

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twelve years later, in 1972, suddenly became inconvenient. "Susan Mary and I loved each other very much," he writes, "but irritated one another far too often for a really successful partnership."

ALSOP's bachelor state had certain advantages. It gave him fluidity, both social and professional, and in his career the two were almost always combined. He flourished professionally in Washington, where his first job was to cover the Senate. There were no blow-dryers in senatorial washrooms in those days; extreme idiosyncrasy was still abundant among such Senators as Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, Carter Glass of Virginia, and Charles McNary of Oregon. Congressional staffs, which Alsop regards as "certainly the greatest and most pernicious organizational change that has overtaken the American government in my lifetime," had not yet come to their current position of dominance. Security was not a worry of daily life, and one could dine at the homes of the powerful without discovering large men with walkie-talkies hiding in the bushes. For that matter, one could walk up to the White House without having to give one's Social-Security number at the gate.

This was during the years 1936-37, which Alsop claims were, in Washington, "a paradise for political reporters." He was in his middle twenties and seemed to go from strength to strength. Along with giving satisfaction to his employers on the *Herald-Tribune*, he and Turner Catledge, the New York *Times* man, teamed up to write regular articles on the Washington political scene for the *Saturday Evening Post*, which had an enormous readership and conferred something close to national celebrity on its writers. While still in his twenties, Alsop was offered, at three times his current salary, a syndicated column which he wrote with Robert Kintner, then the *Herald-Tribune*'s man at the Treasury Department and later chairman of the National Broadcasting Corporation.

Alsop tried to base his columns on reporting as well as on opinion. He was a legwork man. Early in his Washington career he devised three reportorial rules from which, he claims, he did not often deviate:

> One was always do your best to learn your subject so that you don't ask foolish questions; two, always do your best to avoid wasting time during an interview, even when your line of questioning follows a tortuous and difficult trail; and, third, no matter how big a bastard you have to talk business with, never be rude unless the bastard is rude first.

Still, rules, principles, and legwork aside, Alsop owed some of his success to his connections. Even though, as he writes, "I was never on intimate terms with my distant relative [FDR] in the White House," he had ties through family or school with such high-level public servants as James Forrestal, Robert Lovett, Dean Acheson, and Archibald MacLeish—and if not with them, then with their wives. "All the men I have named—and usually their wives—had fun in one another's houses, and I am proud to say they came often to my house. All sorts of matters were discussed that, as a newspaper man, I should not normally have heard." But he did—and, owing to social connections, always would.

Although his mother was a staunch Republican, much interested in Connecticut politics, Alsop became a Democrat during the New Deal. He admired FDR without particularly liking him. He faulted him on style, the President's personal manner having a false, glad-hander ring to Alsop, though he would eventually rate him, along with Washington and Lincoln, as one of our three greatest Presidents. He had a much greater regard for Henry L. Stimson, who had been Herbert Hoover's Secretary of State and would be FDR's Secretary of War, and whom he describes thus:

> In matters of style, the white-whiskered, straight-backed Stimson was as impossibly grand a figure as there was in Washington; and in matters of substance, he was as great a public servant as this country has ever seen. I held the great statesman in awe, and on the few impersonal occasions when we did meet, I could manage little more than a muted and respectful greeting.

WITH American entry into World War II in 1941, Alsop gave up his column to enlist in the armed forces. Through an elaborate string of events and snafus, he eventually served the better part of four years in China with General Chennault's American Volunteer Group, more popularly known as the Flying Tigers. He served Chennault as, in his words, an "aide and chief odd-jobs man." He was captured by the Japanese and, with other people then thought to constitute a hostile population, was interned for seven months in Hong Kong, during which time he read and, under instruction, learned 4,000 Chinese characters, 3,000 of which he could write.

Alsop had a knack for turning the war into his oyster. Service in the Far East finds him, for example, being carried about in a wicker chair toted by four men. In Rangoon, he employs a "bearer" to look after his personal needs. He reads Toynbee in a hammock on an airplane. "Perhaps it is a major failing," he writes, "but throughout my long life I have always sought out people who, for either love or, more usually, for money, will care for my daily needs." In Chungking, for $6 a day, he finds quite elegant digs, which include "three excellent but far too copious meals, . . . a ration of Chungking gin, the services of a valet, and the privilege of having guests whenever I pleased."

Even in China, social life for Alsop did not feel much different from Washington. The socially

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ubiquitous Diana and Duff Cooper—he was Churchill's Minister for Far Eastern Affairs—show up. (Alsop, in his Duc de Saint-Simon mode, explains that Lady Diana slept with her eyes open; owing to too many face-lifts, she was unable to close them.) When they meet, Alsop is warmly greeted by General Douglas MacArthur, who "knew I was a formerly prominent member of the press and vaguely connected to the Roosevelts." When he dines at the Chiang Kai-sheks, the feeling is not unlike the Roosevelt White House:

> It had the same fantastic mixture of people, the same slightly suspicious food, the same curious atmosphere of graciousness mingled with constraint, even the same earnest, devoted, and slightly bossy female followers of the lady of the house to hand out the food and shepherd the customers.

Even in the midst of the terrors and complications of war, there is time for gossip, as when the wife of the British ambassador to China, Lady Violet Seymour, asks Alsop if the President still "sees" her friend Lucy Mercer.

Always the insider, Alsop, as a member of General Chennault's staff, was called in to brief President Roosevelt about the complicated situation in China, where General Joseph Stilwell despised and wished to eliminate Chiang Kai-shek, whom he referred to as "a grasping, bigoted, ungrateful little rattlesnake." As the man assigned to advise Chennault on political and logistical matters, Alsop felt that Stilwell's hostility to Chiang was a grave mistake, in every way, and, exerting what pressure he could, he simultaneously reassured the generalissimo and his family that things would be settled in their favor and worked to remove Stilwell from his post in China. By his own account, he made a modest contribution toward achieving both goals, and there is no reason to disbelieve him. "My years in China," he writes, "were the only ones of my professional life in which I ceased to be a commentator from the sidelines and became a minor actor in the historical process itself."

After the war Alsop returned to newspaper work, now joining with his younger brother Stewart in writing a thrice-weekly column under the rubric, "Matter of Fact." In this new partnership, Joe tended to do much of the traveling, for he had a personal rule forbidding him to write about any country he had not visited, while Stewart, who had a wife and children, looked after the store in Washington. The column would eventually be syndicated in 137 newspapers. Richard Kluger contends that it owed its success to being "rooted in hard reporting."

Alsop allows that he and his brother had "developed a reputation for mild public pessimism." In fact, the Cassandra-ish impulses of the Brothers Alsop—Joe speaks of "a flair for calamities"—earned them the nicknames of Doom and Gloom, and when they really got going (on such issues as nuclear armaments) they could make Chicken Little look like Dale Carnegie. When the brothers split up professionally in 1958—Stewart, who needed money for his large family, was offered a full-time job writing for the *Saturday Evening Post*—and Joe continued to write the column alone, *Time* magazine remarked that "the eloquent voice of Joe Alsop, amplified by syndication, ha[s] dedicated itself to the cause of scaring tranquil humanity into its wits."

Joseph Alsop's politics were what must now be called cold-war liberal. He refers to himself in his memoirs as "a lifelong Democrat," though this was true only with qualifications. He was not, for example, an Adlai Stevenson man, being put off by Stevenson's habit of always bringing Abraham Lincoln into the conversation—a sign, or so Alsop felt, that he was in need of a psychiatrist; and then when, in his acceptance speech to the Democratic convention in 1952, Stevenson put himself in the place of Jesus—"Let this cup pass from me"—Alsop felt the time had come to punt:

> The more I saw of Stevenson, the more I thought of the world he came from: the cultivated, old-fashioned, only-WASP-family-in-town world where cast-iron deer adorned every front lawn and ladies in white lace dresses and lingerie hats took tea and finger sandwiches under the elms. American upper-class genteel was the note, and I had long ago concluded that one could not be a serious politician and be genteel.

Alsop's political and social circles in the postwar years were one and the same. Charles Bohlen, Averell Harriman, Dean Acheson, Robert Lovett, John McCloy, and George Kennan were among its main members. "These were civil servants of a type that is no longer found," Alsop writes. He is not without criticism of these men, averring that Harriman was "one of the most self-absorbed and coldly ambitious men I have ever seen in government" and that Kennan's elitist views made him "more wrong than anyone else and more right than anyone else." Still, here was modern WASP-dom at its most impressive. As Alsop observes:

> Although schooled in the great law offices and banking houses of Manhattan and more often than not Republican by inclination, these men tended to be both nonpartisan and, it sometimes seemed to me, almost excessively non-ideological. Entering government from a sense of duty, they stayed on for a variety of reasons: for patriotism, for power, but mostly because, in the very long run, they could find no parallel outlet for their considerable talents in the private world.

Alsop speaks of enjoying "the postwar time perhaps more than any other in my professional life." During this period, he covered the war in

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Korea, where A.J. Liebling likened him to "a rich man's Ernie Pyle" and where, in his first direct experience of a shooting war, he claims to have conquered the cowardice under fire that all men fear. But what must have pleased him even more about this whole period was that he could number himself among those who were never cowed by Joseph McCarthy. The Senator, in fact, accused both Joe and his brother Stewart of being Communists, impeccable though their anti-Communist credentials were. But Alsop consistently wrote against him anyway, even going so far to out-McCarthy McCarthy by discussing, in print, the allegedly non-Euclidian sexual relationship between the Senator and his two chief aides, Roy Cohn and David Schine.

Although it was not true of all among them—John Foster Dulles was a notable exception—for the most part men of WASP background in public life stood up to McCarthyism rather well. One thinks of Dean Acheson and Henry Luce as well as Joseph Alsop. McCarthy, to them, was a buffoon and a boor, and, they soon enough recognized, a damned dangerous one. As for his accusations that some among them were betraying the United States, so secure were they in thinking of it as their country that their only response was outrage. WASPishness does—or at least did—have its privileges, not all of them snobbish.

THIS same sense that it is our country and damn worth fighting for may have been behind Alsop's position during the Vietnam war. He was a hawk all the way as, earlier, he had been about the Bay of Pigs operation, deploring only its ineptitude. National self-interest, and patriotism, too, were in no serious way problematic for WASPs of Alsop's generation. But his generation was also being shuffled off the stage:

> Increasingly, it seemed to me, the tragic defeats of this country—whether abroad in Vietnam or at home, as in the case of Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal—were greeted with unseemly crowing among members of my old trade [journalism]. This crowing made me feel isolated and suddenly out of fashion.

The Vietnam war was perhaps Alsop's most troubled time. He never, in print or in any other public way, criticized the American military in Vietnam, and for this he took a beating, politically and socially. Washington *bien pensants* did what they could to humiliate him. Art Buchwald, in a now-forgotten play, *Sheep on the Runway*, lampooned Alsop in the figure of a pompous and overheated newspaperman. Adam Platt quotes John Kenneth Galbraith calling Joseph Alsop a "leading noncombatant casualty of Vietnam" and adding, "From a much-feared columnist, warrior, and prophet he has become a figure of fun." (In his memoirs, Alsop attempts to pay Galbraith back by recalling how John F. Kennedy used to read "aloud with comic emphasis," at small dinner parties at the White House, long letters of advice sent by Galbraith from his post as ambassador to India.) His views on Vietnam put Alsop out of fashion in social Washington, and this, for a man social to the bone, could not but have hurt. Still, he stuck to his views.

The fall had to have been all the more staggering for coming just after Alsop had climbed what even he must have construed as the Mount Everest of Washington social life. I refer to the Kennedy years, during which Alsop rode very high. "I found a political favorite in John F. Kennedy," he writes, and in 1960 many people felt he was overstepping the bounds of journalism in his partiality, for in some quarters he was thought to be "an informed member of the Kennedy pre-convention team." Although some in the Kennedy camp tended to distrust him, the Brothers K., John and Bobby,

> often asked my advice, not because they thought it was worth having, but because John Kennedy particularly had a strong respect for what may be called "WASP Establishment opinion." I think he used me as litmus paper with which to test WASP reaction to his ideas and initiatives.

If this is really why Kennedy consulted him, the return payment was all that Alsop could want. He and his wife were regularly invited to the White House, and, better yet, John and Jacqueline Kennedy frequently came to Alsop's house for dinner. ("Let us be vulgar and have some fun," says a character in "Pandora," a Henry James story set in Washington, "let us invite the President.") Still better, on the night of his inauguration, the new President ended his evening by dropping in at Alsop's Georgetown home. As Alsop recounts all this in his memoirs, in gushing detail, one can almost hear the pounding in his snobbish heart.

What I suspect John F. Kennedy got out of it, apart from the pleasure of Alsop's company, was a strong WASP connection. Old Joseph Kennedy, a roughneck and a freebooter, an Irishman and a Catholic, had had it made plain to him on more than one occasion by people in positions of social power that there were some things money could not buy. But what money could not buy, truly big-time power of the kind that came with the presidency could—and did. Part of the public's attraction to John F. Kennedy, it is not going too far to say, was that he had the suavity and self-assurance of the WASP without having to carry the burden of prejudice and dreary narrow-mindedness that was also part of the WASP tradition and heritage. John F. Kennedy, in other words, could live and act like a WASP without having to be one. And the regular company of Joseph Alsop would assure him that, socially, he had succeeded where his father had not.

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When John F. Kennedy was killed in Dallas, his death struck Alsop more forcibly, he says, than that of his own father. The Kennedy years in Washington were the last in which he felt "a really young man." "Nothing would ever be the same in my life again," he writes, "or, it hardly needs saying, in the life of the country." (In my view, it needs more than saying, it needs critical examination; but let that pass.) After the Kennedy presidency, life, as Alsop relives it in his memoirs, was all downhill, and not long after he brings *"I've Seen the Best of It"* to a quick close.

In 1974, when his brother Stewart died after losing a brave bout with cancer, Alsop retired as a journalist. To help pave the way for his retirement he sold off some of the art he had begun collecting in China during World War II. He still had fifteen years to live after quitting journalism. He put in a great deal of time on a thick volume titled *The Rare Art Traditions*, which is full of loose learning and interesting information but lacks the authority that only a life spent with so rich a subject confers. His appetite for the good party—stimulating company, exquisite food, superior wine—never diminished, despite the fact that he was now playing the old familiar WASP role of the back number. (Clifton Webb did it best in the movies.) It is as a back number that he writes:

> The truth is, I could no longer understand what was happening in America, perhaps because I had finally become an old man, frozen in the viewpoints of the past. The pleasures the young indulged in during the 1960's seemed to me strikingly unpleasurable. The work of the younger artists struck me as thoroughly ridiculous or boring or, more often, both. And the chatter of the newly fashionable writers and so-called intellectuals began to drive me mad.

When Alsop was told that he had lung cancer—he was a full-court cigarette smoker, putting away as many as 95 a day—he chose not to put himself through the tortures of oncological therapy. Instead he determined to live out the days left to him, as his brother had done many years before, in the hope of being able to enjoy them. He died in 1989, less than two months short of his eightieth birthday.

WHAT Joseph Alsop's very readable memoirs, with their alternating interest in major events and minor gossip, make plain is that to be a journalist is, in the nature of the job, eventually to fall out of favor, fashion, and even phase with one's countrymen. Insider though Alsop always was, this much can be said for him: he had the integrity to write only what he believed, or at least believed was good for the United States. He wrote hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of words of opinion on endless political problems, questions, issues, and in the end one has to wonder—as he must often have done in his last years—what it all came to. The answer, alas, is not very much. But then the journalist's unwritten contract is to be allowed to feel the excitement of having a small hand in current affairs with no greater risk than being proved wrong, in exchange for which he is guaranteed that everything he says will, before long, be quite forgotten.

Still, all things considered, Alsop had a pretty good roll of the dice, a first-class seat all the way. If he lived to see his own social class go off in a collective loss of confidence, at least it was not in a tumbril. (Consider in this connection George Bush, whose own WASP credentials are impeccable but who prefers instead, for reasons he must think politic, to pass himself off as a good-ole-boy Texan.) Joseph Alsop would himself have made an excellent secondary character in a novel not by Henry James or even by Somerset Maugham but, such was the falling-off in the character and interest of the class which formed and conditioned his every idea and thought, by John P. Marquand. It is a novel one can already imagine moldering, dusty and forgotten, on some back shelf.

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Once Again, Anti-Semitism Without Jews

Robert S. Wistrich

It is hardly surprising that in the three years since the fall of Communism, there has been a resurgence of the old demons of nationalism and anti-Semitism on the European continent, and particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. In this part of the world, after all, problems of national identity have been acute ever since the abortive revolutions of 1848. The experience of Communist rule for four decades after World War II merely froze rather than resolved these underlying conflicts and tensions, including the anti-Semitism which between the two world wars was an integral expression of the struggle for Polish, Romanian, Hungarian, or Slovak national identity. Once that iron grip came unfastened, many of the old wounds resurfaced, alongside and in opposition to aspirations for national independence based on traditions deriving from the Western Enlightenment.

It must be remembered that after the Nazi rise to power, anti-Semitism became an official or semi-official policy in the lands of Central and Eastern Europe. This was no chance development. Ever since the late 19th century, Jews had been regarded as an alien element which had somehow succeeded in infiltrating and undermining whole sectors of the local economy, society, politics, and culture. Even when they were assimilated, Jews were often seen as being separate from the nation or *Volk*, as belonging to a distinct culture of their own, or as espousing orientations inimical to the goals favored by integral nationalists.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the important role played by individual Jews in the early Communist movements of Russian, Central, and Eastern Europe exacerbated still further this nationalist antagonism. To many, especially in Germany and Hungary after 1918, Communism itself was an import of alien Jewish revolutionaries, just as the Russian Revolution was seen as the handiwork of a Jewish conspiracy. Even though the Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe between the wars were themselves far from supporting Communism, national sentiment thrived on antagonism to the purported amalgam of "Judeo-Bolshevism."

The consequences were extraordinarily destructive. Between 1917 and 1920, the struggle for Ukrainian national independence led to the mass slaughter of Jews. The "Judeo-Bolshevik" amalgam also played an important role in the White Terror in Hungary during 1920, breaking up what remained of the pre-1914 Hungarian-Jewish symbiosis under Hapsburg rule. In Poland and Romania, the backlash against "Judeo-Communism" was also a constant feature of interwar nationalism. In Germany, needless to say, it became one of the most important propaganda weapons of the Right and above all of the Nazi movement in its rise to power. Hitler's National Socialist ideology and the Holocaust itself are difficult to imagine without the intensive manipulation of the "Judeo-Bolshevik" myth, and so is the collaboration of so many Lithuanians, Estonians, Ukrainians, Romanians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Croats, and others in the "Final Solution."

In Soviet Russia, the home of Bolshevism, things were obviously different. Indeed, the Soviet government conducted a protracted campaign against anti-Semitism in the 1920's, and even the Stalinist terror of the 1930's discouraged the open expression of anti-Semitic ideas as well as other "deviations" from official Marxist-Leninist ideology. But by the 1940's Stalin's turn toward Great Russian chauvinism had brought to the surface the anti-Semitic sentiments deeply embedded in the Russian national past, and these burst forth in the campaign against the "rootless cosmopolitans" and in the barely disguised anti-Jewish paranoia of the Doctors' Plot.

This turn of policy, which was pursued in varying degrees by Stalin's successors right up to the advent of Gorbachev in the mid-1980's, was frequently masked under the more respectable cover of anti-Zionism. And in Eastern Europe, too, anti-Zionism helped ensure that the older anti-Semitism would continue to fester, both as an el-

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ement of policy from above and in popular sentiment against Jews from below. Thus the murderous legacy of the Nazi occupation and the much older tradition of religious and nationalist antagonism to Jews were never really overcome.

NEVERTHELESS, some elements of the "Jewish Question" clearly changed after 1945. On the eve of the Holocaust there were 8.1 million Jews—no less than 49 percent of world Jewry—in Eastern Europe, the USSR, and the Balkans. Today, even if we include the European parts of Russia and Ukraine, Eastern Europe accounts for not much more than 10 percent of world Jewry. North America has displaced Eastern Europe as the major demographic reservoir of Diaspora Jewry, and Israel has taken over the role of the geopolitical core. The Jewry of Central and Eastern Europe (excluding the ex-USSR) is a decimated, pale shadow of its former self, with only the Hungarian community approaching the 100,000 mark. The great prewar Jewish communities of Poland, Romania, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, not to mention those in the Balkans and the Baltic states, were all wiped out by Hitler, and their remnants emigrated in the Stalinist aftermath.

Together with them disappeared any real or objective basis for a "Jewish Question" in Central and Eastern Europe, rooted in socioeconomic competition, problems of cultural assimilation and modernization, majority-minority conflicts, or religious differences. Jews were no longer a significant element in the struggle among rival national movements, no longer a force in capitalist modernization, in the urban economy, or in the regeneration of national culture. Nor were there any longer masses of Orthodox Jews still living enclosed in their East European ghetto tradition to give credence to claims of Jewish separatism.

Only in one respect, perhaps, was there still an objective basis for postwar anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, namely, the prominent role played by some Jews in the imposition of Soviet-style Communism. This was, and remains, a particularly resonant theme in postwar Poland, to some extent in present-day Romania, and to a lesser degree in Hungary and Slovakia. It has also been revived with a vengeance by contemporary Russian anti-Semites who retroactively accuse the Jews *en bloc* of having carried out a "genocide" of the Russian people beginning with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

But whether there is an objective basis for it or not, the "Jewish Question" has definitely been revived in the wake of the collapse of the Communist regimes, and has become inextricable from all the nagging issues of national identity—of what actually constitutes Polishness, Czechness, Hungarianness, etc.—that bedevil Eastern European society. We are witnessing the gory results of that larger contention today in Yugoslavia, and perhaps tomorrow in Moldova, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, and the Balkans. Czechs and Slovaks may have united to overthrow Communism but since then, and despite the close linguistic ties between them, militant separatism has revived in Slovakia, and the Jews have been dragged into the picture.

In forging their national identity, Czechs can at least look back to a functioning interwar liberal democracy, which preceded the Nazi conquest and the later Communist seizure of power. But Slovak nationalists, dreaming of sovereignty, look back with admiration to Msgr. Josef Tiso, the leader of the only separate Slovak state in modern times, who collaborated with the Nazis and bore considerable responsibility for the genocide of Slovak Jews. Is it any wonder, then, that with Tiso's rehabilitation, anti-Semitic slogans have multiplied on the walls of Bratislava and other Slovak cities? (Czechs, too, are hardly immune from such intolerance. In the Czech areas of Bohemia and Moravia, there has been a rise in xenophobic attacks on Gypsies and migrant foreign workers, and a mushrooming of skinhead and neo-Nazi gangs.)

The situation is much worse in Croatia, where the conservative, nationalist president, Franjo Tudjman, has proved to be a specialist in the rewriting of history. In a book published in 1989, Tudjman reduced the number of Jewish victims of the Holocaust to one million, and accused Jews of having "taken the initiative in preparing and provoking not only individual atrocities but also the mass slaughter of non-Jews, Communists, partisans, and Serbs." According to Tudjman, Jews participated in liquidating Gypsies in the notorious Jasenovac camp, when in fact the truth is the exact opposite: thousands of Serbs and innocent Jews were brutally murdered there by the pro-Nazi Croatian Ustashe. In the same work, appropriately entitled *Wastelands of Historical Reality*, Tudjman even labels Israel a "Judeo-Nazi" state.

It is fortunate for the 2,000 Jews in today's Croatia that Tudjman's popular support derives not from his anti-Semitism but from a perfectly legitimate protest at Serbian domination and from the longstanding historical aspirations for Croatian independence. It should also be noted that in the civil war, both Serbian and Croatian Jews have aligned themselves with their respective communities, without, for the moment, suffering specifically as Jews. But nobody can guarantee that this will remain the case in the future, whether in Croatia, Serbia, or Bosnia-Herzegovina.

AS FOR Poland, Hungary, and Romania, the elections of 1990 showed that in these countries popular anti-Semitism is still a factor that can be exploited in public life. In

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Hungary, the Alliance of Free Democrats (a party generally favored by Hungarian Jews) was targeted by some supporters of the victorious Hungarian Democratic Forum. One of the Forum's spokesmen, the playwright Istvan Curka, scathingly referred to a "dwarfish minority" that had forced the whole society to accept "that their truth is the only truth," and he openly blamed Jewish Communists for having destroyed the self-esteem of the Hungarian people. This was not an isolated example—although it is also the case that Prime Minister Jozsef Antall has vigorously condemned anti-Semitism, that his government has developed close ties with Israel (as have the governments of several other East European countries), and that Hungarian-Jewish life is currently flourishing. Moreover, the Hungarian Catholic Church has been more forthright in denouncing anti-Semitism than any of its counterparts in Eastern Europe. Similarly, many of the country's leading writers and intellectuals have spoken out against anti-Semitism.

Things are decisively otherwise in Romania, where since the coup of December 1989 there has been a steady rise in both xenophobia and anti-Semitism, despite the fact that only about 18,000 Jews remain in the country. The nationalist opposition newspaper *Romania Mare*, with a circulation of over half-a-million, regularly features anti-Semitic articles. In April 1991, the editor claimed that too many Jews held key positions in Romania:

> The heads of TV and radio are all Jews, and in parliament it rains Jews by the bucket. It's not their fault—domination has been their style since the dawn of time—but can't they let us breathe a little, instead of trampling on us as they have been doing since 1947?

This charge has been echoed in a number of other newspapers which frequently blame the Jews for bringing Communism to Romania. Some members of the Committee for National Salvation, including the former Prime Minister, Petre Roman, have also been attacked for being of Jewish origin. The problem was further aggravated in April 1991 by a silent tribute in the Romanian parliament to the memory of the country's anti-Semitic wartime dictator, Marshal Ion Antonescu, favored ally of Hitler. Although the ex-Communist president, Ion Iliescu, dissociated himself from these tributes, he has also accused those who condemn anti-Semitism in Romania of exaggerating the situation and sullying the country's reputation. Thus the weakness of the government, combined with economic hardship, anger at the slow pace of reform, and the lack of a democratic tradition help to keep anti-Semitism alive as an outlet for popular frustrations and discontent.

All this is even more the case in Poland. According to recent surveys, in a country where there remain at most 10,000 Jews out of a population of nearly 40 million, about 30 percent of the populace hold anti-Semitic views. This has led to such grotesque absurdities as the 1990 whisper campaign against the then-Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a Catholic accused of being a "crypto-Jew." (The rumors were spread by those supporting Lech Walesa for the premiership.) At the time the response by the Catholic Church and other official Polish bodies was startlingly inappropriate—a prominent Polish bishop publicly "confirmed" that not a single drop of tainted Jewish blood lurked in Mazowiecki's past. At the end of 1990, not surprisingly, there was a rash of swastika daubings on Jewish buildings in Warsaw and elsewhere, and slogans like "A Good Jew is a Dead Jew" appeared at the Umschlagplatz, the site from which in the summer of 1942 some 300,000 Warsaw Jews had been shipped to the Treblinka death camp.

Poland is perhaps the most spectacular example of the truth that anti-Semitism does not always require the presence of actual Jews in order to flourish. But it is not the only such example. Whether we are dealing with the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, mindless graffiti, pseudo-intellectual theories about a world Jewish conspiracy or "hidden" Jews in the government, this type of anti-Semitism can be detected all over Central and Eastern Europe today. It even surfaces as part of the "explanatory" mechanism behind the measures taken in some of these countries against Gypsies—who today bear the brunt of racial stereotyping and social harassment in Eastern Europe. For who but the Jews, with their well-known world conspiracy, could be behind the influx of these undesirable people?

SOMETHING similar is happening in Western and Central Europe as well, where the fear of being "swamped" by unassimilable foreign cultures has given impetus to a resurgent radical Right. In France, Belgium, Germany, and Austria this new Right does and will continue to link the imaginary "Jewish Question" with the real problem of foreign immigration. For the hard-core racists of Western Europe, anti-Semitism is anyway a central pillar of their outlook, and they have no difficulty depicting the alleged threat to the white European race as part of a diabolical Jewish conspiracy against "Aryan" civilization.

Particularly relevant to any assessment of East European anti-Semitism is the situation in Central Europe, for it was here, and above all in Germany and Austria, that anti-Semitism was primarily elevated (or rather degraded) into the pseudo-science of "biological politics," and here that the conspiracy theories embodied in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* mixed with national

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humiliation after World War I, mass unemployment, and the middle-class fear of Communism to produce the most explosive anti-Jewish cocktail of all time, Hitler's National Socialist movement. Historically, ever since 1880, this has been the geopolitical core from which anti-Jewish trends elsewhere on the Continent have tended to derive inspiration and reinforcement.

Could there be a repeat of this pattern today, as German economic and political influence is once more strongly felt in the East? Certainly no one can deny that the reunification of Germany has been an epochal event in the postwar history of Europe, bringing an end to the once seemingly unbridgeable gap between East and West. But along with all the good that has flowed from this development, there has also been an unprecedented rise in violent xenophobia within Germany itself. Since the winter of 1991 foreign workers have been attacked in ever increasing numbers by jack-booted neo-Nazis and skinheads, and crowds have cheered on these thugs as they besiege the hostels sheltering immigrants.

Germany has rapidly had to absorb some 400,000 ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and it received by far the largest number of asylum-seekers to the European Community, while bearing the huge costs of salvaging the sick economy of former East Germany. So there are objective grounds for discontent. But behind the hostility toward foreigners there is also more than a palpable tinge of racism, as ultra-Right groups have campaigned on the slogan "Germany for the Germans." In the city-state of Bremen at the end of September 1991 one such group, the Deutsche Volksunion, won 6.2 percent of the vote, and it recently repeated this performance in Schleswig-Holstein. The radical right-wing Republikaner did even better in Baden-Wurttemberg in April 1992, winning 11 percent of the ballots.

The German government has consistently underplayed the significance of this extremist protest vote, and of neo-Nazi activity in general, ignoring what it signifies—namely, a growing rejection by millions of Germans of the idea of a multiracial or multicultural society. Nor does the government seem able to do anything about the lost generation of the 1990's, especially in East Germany, where deep cynicism and hopelessness reign amid the collapse of the industrial and economic infrastructure. It is on this soil of social distress, loss of identity, and nihilistic disorientation that neo-Nazism is steadily growing.

To be sure, publicly expressed anti-Semitism has to a large extent been delegitimized in Germany. This may help to explain why opinion surveys consistently show that German parliamentarians and national leaders hold far more favorable attitudes to Jews and Israel than do, say, their counterparts in Austria. But there is a marked gap between the attitude of German elites and the responses of the populace. Thus, a survey taken immediately after German unification showed that 58 percent of the population (East and West) believed that "it is time for Germans to put the Holocaust behind them"; 52 percent felt that Israel "should be treated like any other state"; 39 percent believed that "Jews exploit the National-Socialist Holocaust for their own purposes"; and a similar percentage held that "now as in the past, Jews exert too much influence on world events." Interestingly enough, complacent and even callous attitudes seem more prevalent among West than among East Germans, at least in respect to the Holocaust.

In Austria, the radical Right has made even more spectacular gains than in Germany. In November 1991, Jorg Haider's Austrian Freedom party won 23 percent of the vote in Vienna on an anti-foreigner platform. Unlike the portly Franz Schonhüber in Germany, Haider is no Waffen-SS veteran but a charismatic, boyish forty-one-year-old who represents the new wave of yuppie-style proto-fascism in Central Europe. Though he publicly steers clear of the neo-Nazis, some officials in his own party are former members of the neo-Nazi National party of Germany, and one of his closest associates used to publish a magazine that described the Holocaust as "a lie without end." Haider himself has praised the "orderly employment policy" of the Third Reich and has eulogized the Austrian soldiers who fell in the service of the German Wehrmacht. Though Jews are not usually targeted in his electoral politics, there is no doubt that his Freedom party contains a hard core of unreconstructed anti-Semites. Since the levels of anti-Jewish prejudice have remained remarkably high in the Alpine Republic, indeed often exceeding East European levels, a suitably coded populist anti-Semitism would most likely be no barrier to electability or popularity for national politicians.

In Central as in Eastern Europe, anti-Semitism since 1945 has been largely a phenomenon "without Jews," often diffusely directed against the imagined hidden influence and power of "world Jewry." How dangerous is it, then? In Germany as in Austria, as indeed in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Russia, Jews are generally less despised than certain other groups—in the German case, the favored targets are Turks, Gypsies, and "guest workers" or "asylum-seekers" in general. Thus, there would appear to be no immediate grounds for fearing that Germany will once again become a geopolitical center of anti-Semitic inspiration, incitement, or example to any of its East European neighbors. But it does seem to offer a parallel case, sharing some common features with Eastern Europe as well as exhibiting certain unique characteristics of its own.

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Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe has a long history, one which predates by far the rise of modern nationalism. I have not discussed the age-old Christian antagonism to Judaism which underlies the kind of traditional anti-Semitism still to be found in Poland and Slovakia. Nor have I mentioned the extraordinarily tenacious belief in ritual murder, still alive among the more superstitious rural population in parts of Eastern Europe, or the residues of populist peasant anti-Semitism which have their roots in both religious and national sentiment in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Poland, and Ukraine. This peasant populism has long operated with a traditional image of the Jew as moneylender, trader, and exploiting capitalist. The change to a free market and a competitive economy in Eastern Europe, with the severe economic dislocations it is causing, provides an opportunity for a revival of this older kind of anti-Semitism which is in essence anti-capitalist and anti-entrepreneurial.

But in general it is the long-suppressed nationalist and political types of anti-Semitism which seem to me more immediately significant for the post-Communist era. It would be a mistake to exaggerate the threat: what still remains of Jewish life has in many ways improved dramatically with the demise of Communism, and others are hated more than the Jews (if that is any consolation). But it would be a bigger mistake to ignore the threat, if only because anti-Semitism is nowadays more openly expressed and therefore Jews feel more insecure, especially in the former Soviet Union.

Today, popular anti-Semitism all over Eastern Europe is no longer a government policy (masquerading as propaganda against Israel, Zionism, or Judaism) but a spontaneous, often unpredictable sentiment whose bottom line is that the Jews are to blame for everything that is going wrong. However negligible the Jewish proportion of the populace in Central and Eastern Europe today, it seems that life cannot go on without the *Judaeus ex machina*. If he did not exist, then anti-Semites would have to invent him; and so they appear to be doing.

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Politics & the Academy

Elie Kedourie

In 1927 the French man of letters, Julien Benda, published a short book entitled *La Trahison des Clercs*. The phrase, *trahison des clercs*, henceforward passed into common discourse to denote and condemn the subordination of scholarship or speculation to some political interest or commitment. Benda's book soon appeared in English under the title, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*.

Translation is notoriously a very difficult art. The translator has to convey not only the literal meaning of a text or a work but also tones and nuances. In this particular case "intellectual" is manifestly not the equivalent of "*clerc*." In English, "intellectual" has a pejorative ring; it hints at a self-satisfied assumption of superiority, at the arrogant conviction that one has been vouchsafed truths hidden from the vulgar herd, truths that are particularly indispensable to the formulation and execution of public policy.

Clerc has none of these overtones. A *clerc* in the primary sense is a member of the clergy, itself a body of men set apart by ordination for religious service in the church and constituting, as the etymology indicates, God's lot or portion. It is this which Benda had in mind when he used the term to denote not ordained *clercs*, but rather laymen who are set apart, whose vocations and avocations require them to maintain a distance from political interests, and to eschew advocacy in favor of this or that faction or party, even if the victory of the one or the failure of the other might redound to their advantage. To elucidate his meaning, Benda quotes Goethe: "Let us leave politics to the diplomats and the soldiers."

Clerc in Benda's sense has no ready equivalent in English, at least none whose meaning and associations would be immediately familiar and intelligible. "Clerk," in particular, will not do, since English usage has now given the word a range of different significations. As it happens, there does exist a word which conveys exactly the meaning Benda had in mind, but it is not and has never been in current or common use. The word is "clerisy," which was coined by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his book, *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (1830). To Coleridge, the clerisy were the members of the National Church, by which he did not mean the Church of England or any other Christian church. "The proper *object* and end of the National Church," Coleridge wrote, "is civilization with freedom; and the duty of its ministers . . . would be fulfilled in the communication of that degree and kind of knowledge to all, the possession of which is necessary for all in order to their CIVILITY." The function of this clerisy lies "in producing and re-producing, in preserving, continuing and perfecting, the necessary sources and conditions of national civilization."

How, then, according to Benda, does the clerisy commit treason? It is by becoming, as he puts it, the spiritual militia of the temporal. What ought to remain an *intelligence-miroir*, a mind content with receiving, absorbing, and reflecting on whatever happens in the world, has become an *intelligence-glaive*, intelligence used as a weapon to defend one particular interest or attack another.

Rulers, of course, have always sought to use *clercs* for their purposes. Benda quotes a memorandum sent by Napoleon to his Interior Minister suggesting that the writing of French history should not be left to private industriousness or to some publisher's financial venturesomeness. History, Napoleon laid down, should be written in such a manner as to serve the interest of the state.

Napoleon was by no means the first ruler, nor has he proved the last, to seek control over the scholarly enterprise. What is new for Benda is that in the modern world, writers and scholars have *themselves* desired to put their talents at the service of a political cause, and have rejoiced and gloried in this service. He quotes the Marquis de Condorcet, a contemporary of Napoleon's and as much a victim of revolutionary politics as Napoleon was its supreme beneficiary. In his *Historical Sketch of the Successive Advances of the Human Mind*, Condorcet wrote that historians should

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keep themselves eternally vigilant in order to identify and stifle under the weight of reason the earliest seeds of superstition and tyranny. This is one aspect of what Benda calls the divinization of the political.

A FEATURE of the modern world is the mobilization of history and of historians in a political cause—for Condorcet it was the cause of progress. The polities of classical antiquity, though placing themselves under tutelary deities, did not believe that they were themselves divine. Thucydides was ready to envisage the possibility of a world in which Athens was no more, and as late as the 16th century the historian Guicciardini could write that

> all cities, all states, all kingdoms are mortal; whether in the course of nature or by accident, everything some time or other will perish. This is why a citizen who witnesses the death of his country cannot lament its misfortune with as much reason as he does his own ruin, for the country has simply suffered the fate which in any case it was destined to suffer, while the disgrace is entirely his, whose misfortune was to be born during the period when such a disaster was to eventuate.

Thucydides and Guicciardini were at the opposite pole from the outlook widely prevalent in the modern world that salvation—that is, earthly salvation—must come, and that it will come through political action. The late Ghanaian dictator Kwame Nkrumah expounded it with succinct eloquence when he exhorted the masses of his countrymen who, in a moment of enthusiasm, put their future in his hands: "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all the rest shall be added unto you."

In this quest for the political kingdom, the clerisy plays a vital role as recruiting sergeants and subordinate officers. Their value, indeed, lies wholly in this, that they devote their work to advancing a national (or a class) interest. Benda's argument is directed against those French *clercs*, whether writers or academics, who had knowingly and gladly subordinated their scholarship or artistic gifts to one side of the political spectrum, the nationalist cause (as represented in his day by the Action Française), or, on the other side, to that of the proletariat (of which the Communist International claimed then to be the champion). And both sides encouraged, even demanded, such commitment. Charles Maurras, the founder of the Action Française, denounced as "savage and brutal" the activity of those *clercs* guided by a desire for the truth, and *mutatis mutandis* this was also exactly the same outlook of someone like the Leninist writer Georg Lukács. If we recall Coleridge's description of the clerisy as a body whose object and end are civilization with freedom, and whose activity lies in the maintenance and spread of civility, then it is manifest that a commitment to a political cause which governs and constrains clerkly activities is self-canceling and self-destructive. An appetite for truth is incompatible with the duties of a recruiting sergeant.

The phenomena against which Benda was writing were much more visible in France than in England or the U.S. There was no movement here comparable to the Action Française in its intellectual prestige or in its spread within the academy and among the intellectual classes. Nor did Marxism, though it had many devotees, occupy the same commanding position within British or American intellectual life as it did for so long in France. This has perhaps to do with the relative stability of British and American political institutions compared with the turbulence and extremism which have punctuated French politics from 1789 almost to the present day, where the body politic has been riven by unappeasable hatreds, the legitimacy of successive regimes has been questioned by large and influential groups, and where political passions have raged uncontrollably.

But in today's English-speaking world (as indeed in today's France), we do now see a political commitment within the academy having to do neither with the character and definition of the body politic nor with the class struggle. This particular commitment has arisen out of a fairly recent development in the history of Western countries, namely, their expansion outside Europe and their military, political, and intellectual dominance over very large areas of Asia and Africa. Except in its intellectual aspect, this dominance is now dead and gone, but both while it lasted and still today it has inspired within the academy sultry and acrid political passions and tenacious political commitments.

That this should be so is quite remarkable. Military and political expansion, after all, is nothing new in history. Rome and Islam, to take two familiar examples, founded and governed empires which incorporated a large number of alien peoples. Their culture was received and adopted by the conquered. Yet it is impossible to recall any expressions of guilt by Roman rulers or Latin writers over the conquest of Gaul, the subjugation of Egypt, or the destruction of Jerusalem. Nor did the Arab Muslim conquerors of Andalusia or the Turkish Muslim conquerors of the Balkans—two events separated by many centuries—or Muslim chroniclers and men of letters evince any misgivings or remorse over the expansion of the faith or the great increase in its power. On the contrary, it was their subsequent military defeat and political failure which evoked self-examination, a search for what had gone wrong, for what Romans or Muslims must have done to have so signally attracted the punishment of heaven. Nor in their times of power did Roman or Muslim writers take up, let alone fervently embrace, the cause of a conquered group and advocate its secession from Rome or the Muslim state.

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THE reasons behind the singularity of the modern Western attitude toward the government of foreign peoples are by no means mysterious or incomprehensible, but they are quite complex and cannot be set out in short compass. What I want to consider here is one aspect of this attitude—namely, political commitment within the academy either to a foreign nationalism or to what is called anti-imperialism or anti-colonialism—and to elucidate its character by means of a few well-documented examples.

I begin with a case which involved the University of London. At the end of World War I, some Greek businessmen in London, acting with the encouragement of the Greek government, endowed the Koraes chair in Modern Greek History at King's College (which is part of the University of London). The university offered the donors' representatives a say in appointments to the chair and periodic reports on the academic activities of its incumbent. Arnold J. Toynbee was appointed as the first Koraes Professor in 1919. He was a classicist by training, and when in 1912 he was elected Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, after gaining the highest academic honors as an undergraduate, he was thought to have a brilliant academic career before him. He was also the son-in-law of Gilbert Murray, eminent authority on ancient Greece and ardent Liberal. During the war, when in government service, Toynbee had published a voluminous report on anti-Armenian atrocities perpetrated by the Ottoman government, and a pamphlet entitled *The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks*. From the point of view of everyone concerned, then, his credentials seemed of the best.

In 1921, Toynbee visited Greece and Turkey in order to report for the Manchester *Guardian* on the Greco-Turkish wars which had been sparked by the Greek occupation and annexation of Smyrna. What he saw in the theater of war led Toynbee to conclude that when it came to atrocities, Greeks were no better than Turks. He said so in his dispatches, which he shortly afterward collected in a volume containing his reflections on the significance of the war and particularly on the spread of Western ideologies and their role in exacerbating the conflict. This book, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, is probably the best Toynbee wrote. It created a furor, however, among the donors of the Koraes chair, who held that its occupant had no business attacking Greece. Four years after his appointment, Toynbee, who had not been told of the special conditions attaching to it, felt compelled as a result of outside agitation and pressure to resign from his position.

It was no doubt imprudent of the university and of King's College to accept a gift which had such strings attached to it. Other universities have since done the same, particularly in the heyday of OPEC. In many cases university authorities were attracted by the lure of expansion, of establishing new posts and new departments with money which seemed to be offered on a silver platter. The greed manifest in these transactions seems, in its innocence, to be a comparatively venial sin.

It was somewhat different with the Koraes chair. Leading figures at King's and in the university were for it, because they were passionate philhellenes who believed that the modern Greeks were the direct heirs of Phidias and Pericles and hence much superior to the unspeakable Turks. They also believed that the modern Greek cause was just. That cause was the *Megale Idea*, that is, the recovery of Constantinople as well as Ionia and other lands of Greek settlement elsewhere in the Ottoman empire, and the recreation in modern times of "the glory that was Greece." The Principal of King's, Ronald Burrows, in particular was a most fervent admirer of Venizelos, the Prime Minister who had secured the approval of the Allies for the Greek landing at Smyrna, and whose government launched that ill-fated expedition. Burrows wrote a poem, entitled "Song of the Hellenes to Veniselos the Cretan." The last stanza of this jingle gives some idea of the fervor of his commitment:

> Veniselos! Veniselos!
> Thou'll not fail us! Thou'll not fail us!
> Righteousness is on thy face;
> Strength thou hast to rule our race;
> Great in war and great in peace,
> Thou, our second Perikles.

Toynbee's appointment and its sequels, then, were a direct outcome of an uncritical political romanticism, deleterious to the university and to King's College. More seriously, such an attitude was detrimental to historical understanding, an enterprise which the academy exists to promote. The restoration of "the glory that was Greece," or of Greek dominion over Constantinople, could not but be a fantasy. Even if, *per impossibile*, it came to be realized, the result would hardly have been to the taste of any modern Westerner, who would find life in a *polis* or under the caesaropapist rule of a Byzantine emperor impossibly constraining. Such a romantic commitment also stood in the way of a proper understanding of the politics of the kingdom of Greece, from its inception an unstable and intrigue-ridden Near Eastern backwater, passionate devotion to which by an outsider seems a piece of extravagant excess.

THE same may be said about the ideas and intellectual influence of Edward Granville Browne (1862-1926), who in 1902 became Sir Thomas Adams Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge. In 1910, Browne published *The Persian Revolution*, a book which for many decades was accepted as the most authoritative source on the events of 1905-06 that had led to the grant of a constitution by the Shah, and the establishment of a parliament. Browne knew in great detail the vast corpus of Persian

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literature of the Islamic period, and was a great admirer of Persian poetry of the classical age. As a young man he had spent a year traveling in Persia. His travels resulted in *A Year Among the Persians*, a classic book celebrating the grace, beauty, and charm of an ancient civilization that had produced exquisite buildings, beautiful carpets, tiles, pottery, and painting, as well as literature.

The Persian Revolution was also a celebration of something else, namely, the idea that a civilization which had flourished in former centuries vindicated and justified political actions which, if successful, would revivify an ancient and illustrious past. Browne's attitude to modern Persia was thus on a par with Burrows's attitude to modern Greece. It is very interesting that in the preface to *The Persian Revolution* Browne himself draws a parallel between the two countries. No one, he says, would deny that modern Greece owes its independence to the feeling that the ancient Greeks contributed so much to the spiritual, intellectual, and artistic wealth of the human race. Persia stands in the same category, he continues, and has the same claim on our sympathies.

The Persian Revolution does indeed show the extent to which Browne acknowledged this debt, and how fully he tried to repay it. In the preface he sets out the implicit assumptions underlying his narrative: that diversity, not uniformity, "is the higher law and the more desirable state"; that everything has its own generic perfection, attainable by the realization of its own potentialities, not by the adoption of the attributes of something else; and that the destruction of a distinctive type "is a loss to the universe and therefore an evil." Browne regarded the events of 1905-06 as an attempt to preserve the distinctive Persian civilization, and his book was designed to "arouse in the hearts of my countrymen some sympathy for a people who have . . . hitherto received less than they deserve."

Even though a plea for sympathy, Browne's book also purports to narrate a sequence of events. The events had taken place some four or five years before the book was published, but even in 1910, it would have been clear to anyone swayed neither by sympathy nor antipathy that here was a most confused story in which a multitude of agents, moved by a great variety of ambitions and cupidities, by illusions and half-baked plans, some devoid of scruple and others lacking courage, fought it out, to no conclusive result, on that darkling plain where ignorant armies clash by night. And even if this was not clear in 1910, the whole course of Persian history would have led a skeptical historian to set the demand for a constitution, made by a handful of Westernized intellectuals and ambitious divines, and conceded by a feeble and hesitant Shah, against the political traditions of a country whose subjects were for generations inured to passivity, and their rulers accustomed to indulge every despotic whim. Browne's readers, however, would come away with the impression that the sole guilt for the morass lay with Great Britain and Russia. Yet while these two Great Powers had substantial and rival interests in Persia, which they were naturally intent on defending, they had had no hand in creating the political traditions of Persia, in the demand for a constitution, in the elections which followed, or in the anarchy which supervened immediately thereafter.

The failure of Browne's book as history stems in turn from three causes: from the romantic belief that exquisite mosques and beautiful carpets are proof of political virtue; from the belief that virtue and its opposite are easily distinguished in political quarrels; and from the belief that the historian must take the side of persecuted virtue. This last is what Benda called a Christian romanticism. Commitment to the claims of misfortune is admirable in a Mother Teresa, but becomes a dangerous hindrance to the work of a scholar.

THE religion of misfortune found a much devoted votary in Louis Massignon (1883-1962), the influential scholar of Islam who occupied an important chair at the Collège de France between 1926 and his retirement in 1954. Massignon made his name with his doctoral dissertation on Hallaj, a Muslim mystic executed by the Muslim authorities in Baghdad in 922. The work is a remarkable one, and Massignon's knowledge of Islam and its literature, and of the medieval Muslim world, is both minute and massive. Hallaj, however, was by no means a central figure in Muslim religious history, and neither was Islamic mysticism a central feature in the life of the Islamic community. It was Massignon to whom Hallaj was enormously significant, not only in himself but also as an abiding symbol of Islam and indeed of all religious life.

Massignon's preoccupation with Hallaj and his fate became intertwined with his own religious life which, curiously enough, was revolutionized by a very intense experience he underwent in the vicinity of Baghdad in 1908, when he was twenty-five years old. He had gone to Mesopotamia on an archeological expedition and in the course of it was arrested by the Ottoman authorities as a suspected spy and sent under escort to Baghdad. Near Baghdad, at Salman Pak, where stand the remains of a Sassanid palace destroyed by the Muslim conquerors, Massignon, believing himself to be in mortal danger, had some kind of revelation or visitation. It shook him to the core, and changed him from a lukewarm Catholic to a most devout and fervent believer. This intense form of Catholicism and Hallaj's mysticism thereafter became almost indistinguishable. For Massignon, Hallaj was not a historical figure but the archetype of the highest experience men can aspire to; and Islam itself, improbably enough, merged in Massignon's mind with the ascetic Catholicism he

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practiced, with its accent on suffering and on redemption through suffering.

All this might have remained a private preoccupation or obsession had it not carried over into his writing and teaching. A French author who used to go and hear Massignon at the Collège de France wrote that his lectures, supposedly about Muslim law or Arabic literature, would turn into savage attacks on industrial trusts, on rulers, on the Moloch State, all delivered with a sovereign lack of restraint. Massignon's writings confirm and fill out this sketch. Since the time of Hagar, whom Abraham sent away with her son Ishmael, Muslims, Massignon declared, have been the most deprived of human beings. Islam, he also affirmed, does not kneel down before gold, or before the cruelty of police techniques. Muslims have an insurmountable repugnance for banking capital, for state loans, for international cartels, alcoholic drinks, white slavery, or the "nationalization of labor." Red-light districts were introduced into Muslim lands by the colonialists. Although Massignon concedes that homosexuality is known among the Arabs, he insists that it was Europeans, and particularly European Jews, who taught them its abject and sadistic aspects. And so forth.

All of this leaves one wide-eyed in astonishment, coming as it does from the Professor of Islamic Sociology and Sociography who might be expected to know that until very recent times Muslims looked upon themselves as masters and not as victims, that Islam was *par excellence* a civilization in which business flourished, and that red-light districts did not suddenly appear in Muslim countries with the advent of the Christian West. What has taken place here is an intermixing of *mystique* and *politique*, to the loss of both, as well as to the detriment of the academic enterprise. Furthermore, this impossible and desperate jump from *mystique* to *politique* lands Massignon in a crude Marxism where he is utterly out of his depth. Thus, he paints a lurid scenario in which Jewish bankers, beginning in medieval Baghdad and Cairo and then moving on to Lisbon, Amsterdam, and New York, organize and finance first the slave trade and then the oil business, until they now control in secret the entire Anglo-American policy of colonial exploitation, as well as the Arab-Jewish conflict from which it benefits.

We may say of Massignon that, out of pro-Muslim fervor, he ended up a Marxist without knowing it. In the case of another professor at the Collège de France, political commitment was much more conscious and much more articulate. Jacques Berque was born in 1910 in Algeria, the son of a French father who had become a high official in the Algerian administration. He himself served as an official in Morocco between 1934 and 1953. In leisure snatched from his official duties, he wrote an anthropological study of Berber tribal society which in 1956 simultaneously earned him his doctorate and the chair in the Social History of Contemporary Islam, which he held until his retirement in 1981. Like Massignon, therefore, he occupied one of the highest and most influential academic posts in France dealing with the Muslim world today.

From Berque's prolific writings, and particularly from his autobiography, *Memoirs of Two Shores* (1989), we get quite a full picture of his teaching, and the reasons that made it what it was. During his years as an official in the Maghreb, there seems to have been slowly brewing within him a rebellion against the attitudes and the outlook of his parents, a rebellion which came to be also directed against French rule and French settlers in North Africa. Like Burrows, Browne, and Massignon, Berque had a deeply romantic vision of the foreign society which had become the object of his affections. In his case it was Arab society, above all in the Maghreb.

As he says in a book published in 1980, the place of Arabs in his life has been primordial. The Maghreb constituted for him a quest for that which had been lost by the French of North Africa. The Arabs were primordial, also, as friends and especially, he adds, "as women to whom I owe, through the revelation of [sexual] pleasure, the healing of my adolescence." In his memoirs Berque describes how as a young man doing his military service in Morocco he used to frequent the red-light district in company with the native soldiers of his battalion. There he had his "official" girlfriend, his *amie attitrée*, Zohra, who had a body with the curves of a cello and a milk-white smile on a lightly bronzed face. "What a horrible word is whore," he writes. "Our relationship . . . went far beyond the mercenary, it belonged to the category of gift and counter-gift."

Later, when he was an administrator in the Moroccan countryside, Berque would travel on weekends to Casablanca, a journey which took a whole day by bus, in order to visit its red-light district. Encounters there between occupiers and colonized were, he felt, frank and equal, unlike more "decent" ones which partook of the hypocritical and infamous. The red-light district had the effect of liberating a truth, the truth of desire, revealed also through the beauty of the girls with their copper-colored flesh, heavy like statues by Maillol. To Berque, these girls had "an ageless nobility and an integrity which nothing could soil."

It was through Berque's own inner rebellion that the revolutionary program of the liberation movements would eventually touch him. Berque's teaching thus seems to have derived from strong and intimate passions, and from the guilt he felt at being part of the French implantation in North Africa. He suffered in his innermost being the torment of an importunate guest who had installed himself as a master in the hearth of Islam. As the poet Yeats put it: "Come fix upon me that

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accusing eye, I thirst for accusation." To escape the guilt, he had to take sides.

In 1953 Berque gave up his Moroccan post to become a UNESCO official in Egypt, and there, he writes, "*je me tierre-mondisais*"—"I went third world." The third world with which Berque identified he saw as the violent upsurge of fundamental energies overcoming the superficiality of modern civilization. The restitution of a truly universal humanism would come through violence. Terrorism was an ordeal (in the medieval sense of the word), a rite of initiation necessary for the emancipation of the oppressed—an emancipation which was a preview of a future global society. In each of us, Berque declares, there is a third world, and the future of the third world is our own future.

Berque greatly admired the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which he described as a countrywide Chinese theater, taking the place of the traditional Chinese theater which Mao had banned. He also believed that the one-party state was an obvious necessity. Nkrumah he regarded as a humanist, and Nasser as one who made it possible for the Egyptians to attain the status of adults. Berque saw the Arabs in general as a force of resistance against injustice, and as allies of democracy and of socialism. He supported the Algerian FLN in its revolt against the French; as he saw it, his support allowed him to work simultaneously for the freedom of Algeria and for France's true, lost self.

Where now are Nkrumah's humanism, Mao's Cultural Revolution, Arab support for democracy and socialism, freedom in FLN-ruled Algeria? Not the least dismal thing about all these positions is that they render the one who holds them unfit to account for the wreckage left behind by the likes of Nkrumah, Nasser, and the FLN. Why the causes Berque so fervently espoused have ended in failure and heartbreak is a question that has to be answered by others.

The academic enterprise is self-committed, concerned with understanding for the sake of understanding. As an activity it is neither more nor less valuable than other activities; but it is different. Trying to understand for the sake of understanding is, indeed, a fairly recent enterprise of the human mind, taking its place among the great array of activities which strive to create a human world at once intelligible and a source of satisfaction. Political commitment—earnest, sour, joyless—casts a pall over this satisfaction.

In his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, a central document in the annals of the modern European mind, Friedrich Schiller describes artistic creation as something "completely self-contained, and as if existing beyond space, neither yielding nor resisting." Artistic creation is a fulfillment of what Schiller calls man's play-drive, and he adds that man is fully a human being only when he plays. In "the joyous kingdom of play," he says, man is "relieved of the shackles of circumstance, and released from all that might be called constraint, alike in the physical and the moral sphere." It is in some such words that one may describe scholarly activity and its satisfactions. It is free of the compulsions imposed by nature and the urgencies dictated by the practical, and it is adulterated and ruined by extrinsic commitment.

No man can escape commitment, it is sometimes said. This is justified by the argument that every man is of his own time and place, and is indelibly marked by it. This argument forms the basis of what is called the sociology of knowledge, a kind of inquiry which purports to explain and account for any literary or scholarly production by situating the author within his class, his country, and his time. Yet reductionism of this sort involves itself in a vicious circle, since the conclusions of the sociologists of knowledge would themselves have to be judged not in terms of their truth but simply as exemplifying the attitudes of a particular class in a particular country, and so on *ad infinitum*. In any case, the notion of freedom from political commitment does not imply that an author floats in some colorless empyrean, removed from all sublunar judgments and references. Such a being is simply unthinkable. Freedom from political commitment signifies what it says—namely, that *in his work*, the writer is not concerned to defend or attack some political cause in order to ensure either its victory or its defeat.

What the peculiar satisfactions of scholarly activity are we may begin to appreciate if we bring to mind such works as Edward Gibbon on the decline and fall of the Roman empire, Jakob Burckhardt on the Italian Renaissance, Fustel de Coulanges on the ancient city, Gustave von Grunebaum on medieval Islam, or S.D. Goitein on medieval Mediterranean society. These monuments are indeed, in Schiller's words, "completely self-contained, and as if existing beyond space, neither yielding nor resisting." By no conceivable stretch of the imagination can they be said to work in favor of a political cause or against it.

We may, by way of conclusion, quote some lines from Yeats's poem, "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death." Through the power of the poet's genius these lines illumine, by analogy, the life of scholarship, and the particular fulfillment which is its reward:

Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds.

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Trouble on the Right

THE CONSERVATIVE CRACK-UP. By R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR. *Simon & Schuster. 319 pp. $23.00.*

Reviewed by SAM TANENHAUS

IN AN earlier book, *The Liberal Crack-Up* (1984), R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., the founder and still editor-in-chief of the conservative monthly the *American Spectator*, reported the *dérèglement* of what had once seemed an indestructible ideology—the "sensible, tolerant, highly principled body of thought" promulgated by the New Deal and still operative a generation later when the Democratic party embraced "two great and admirable causes, civil rights and welfare." It was only in the late 1960's, Tyrrell argued, that things fell apart, as liberalism foundered on the shoals of the New Left and the youth counterculture with its "petty personal indulgences." By the late 1970's, the battered vessel had splintered into a flotsam of "enthusiasms, usually contradictory, always extremist, often *non compos mentis*." The enthusiasts were Marxists, feminists, environmentalists, pacifists, and assorted others—"New Age Liberals," in Tyrrell's phrase—who in the rigidity of their thinking seemed the opposite of liberal.

It was not a new argument but Tyrrell stated it vigorously, too vigorously at times. As readers of the *American Spectator* can attest, he is himself prone to illiberal and even abusive excess; instead of simply disagreeing with an opponent, he will call him an "idiot," a "low-level psychopath." In his own defense Tyrrell has said that his rhetoric is salutary, since

> some notions parading around the Republic today are so preposterous and sniveling that to accord them careful analysis and courteous rejoinder is to accord them a dignity that is as undeserved as it is injurious to public morals.

The trouble is that blanket dismissals of this sort tend to camouflage mental laziness. And it is not at all clear how Tyrrell safeguards public morals by pinning epithets on people he dislikes. In his new book Truman Capote is the "little frog"; Susan Sontag is an "insufferable pinhead"; Hilton Kramer is a "malcontent" and "not what we Americans call a 'nice' person."

Thankfully, such effusions are the exception and not the rule in *The Conservative Crack-Up*, altogether an engaging work, easy to fault for its shaky arguments but also easy to like. Tyrrell has relaxed as a writer, and his prose is the better for it; the noisy Menckenesque motor has quieted to a gentle thrum. Another surprise: Tyrrell is a seductive memoirist, a keen observer of humans in action, especially of certain mentors and friends—Luigi Barzini, William F. Buckley, Jr., Irving Kristol, Malcolm Muggeridge, Ronald Reagan. The finest pages in *The Conservative Crack-Up* are devoted to reminiscences—affectionate, if sometimes caustic—by means of which Tyrrell directs us, anecdotally, to his heroes.

He describes, for instance, a meeting he and several journalists arranged in 1984 with Ronald Reagan at the White House library. It was a wide-ranging session, capped by the President's "amiable criticism of Hollywood nudity." His auditors had heard this criticism before, "and would hear [it] again"; still, it was "memorable and instructive" when Reagan remarked on a tasteful elision devised by an *auteur* from his own era, Ernst Lubitsch, who once

> conveyed the essence of a love scene by filming nothing more than a pair of hands hanging a "Do Not Disturb" sign on a hotel-room door. With his own hands Reagan demonstrated the scene from the movie. All eyes were on his face.

Save Tyrrell's: they were fastened on the President's hands, which "had come alive with liquid motions," moving nimbly, as an actor's should.

Trivial as this incident seems, it is central to the argument of *The Conservative Crack-Up*. Reagan, Buckley, *et al.* are Tyrrell's Lubitsches, conservative maestros whose legerdemain has not been watched closely enough by their epigones, the rising clerisy of the Right. These, all thumbs, have bungled an opportunity—the only one of its kind in recent American history—to translate conservative ideas into cultural realities.

The big chance, in Tyrrell's telling, came in 1980, with Reagan's landslide victory. The two terms that followed were a political triumph but could have been something epochal, a lasting social transformation to rival the New Deal, which to Tyrrell stands as a glorious example of how political ideas can irradiate an entire culture. Nothing like this occurred under Reagan, and today we are left with a rudderless movement that has drifted into the rocks of factionalism and crude self-parody *à la* Patrick J. Buchanan.

Tyrrell is curiously enamored of the 1930's, above all of its conjunction of politics and art. He likes it that Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson extracted music from FDR's social programs and that Archibald MacLeish and Robert Sherwood "crossed into politics and government with a frequency impossible even to imagine during the Reagan years." Tyrrell is a fan, too, of the WPA, of its patronage of younger artists who went on to become junior messengers of the new social gospel.

No less than the Roosevelt years, John F. Kennedy's "Thousand Days," meretricious as they were, have somehow also hypnotized Tyrrell. He has read all the misty memoirs and has concluded there can be no Camelot without troubadors, skilled mythographers whose business it is to bathe an administration in a wash of glamor and virtue. Had Reagan too been surrounded by "glitterati," the nation might have enjoyed a true conservative Renaissance, writes Tyrrell. Instead, conservatives inadvertently conspired with the liberal-

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dominated media to addle the public.

Tyrrell's nostalgia for the New Deal is understandable. It is perplexing, however, to read so rosy an account of its cultural apparatus in the same book that repeatedly excoriates what he calls the "*Kultursmog*," a "gloomy cloud over American life embracing political ideas at its core and artistic ideas out on its gauzy peripheries." This is the same cloud, after all, that first lowered in the 1930's, the decade of proletarian novels and *Waiting for Lefty*—of art debased into propaganda and of intellectuals who touted the New Deal in the interests not of democracy but of the Popular Front. Tyrrell evidently thinks politics and culture make good bedfellows as long as the politics and the culture are of the right kind—his kind. But the only cultural ground conservatives have gained in recent years is by calling, precisely, for the *de*-politicization of art, of ideas, of university curriculums; is that ground now to be surrendered?

Tyrrell misses this point, perhaps, because he writes as an insider still disappointed that the Reagan administration was staffed at its upper reaches by intellectuals who "were neither literary nor artistic" and were therefore uninterested in "affecting culture." These were, alas,

> policy intellectuals, people who bring high intellect to bear on one or two areas of policy. . . . [But] beyond, say, Strategic Defense or Marginal Tax Rules, a policy intellectual's interests might well be indistinguishable from those of a shoe salesman. And occasionally the shoe salesman has a more subtle mind.

This may be true, but given the history of cultural politics in 20th-century America, policy wonks in high office would seem to be the least of our worries. Tyrrell wishes a gifted conservative novelist like the late Walker Percy had been courted by the Reagan administration. (In fact, Percy was the Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities in 1989, and enjoyed cordial relations with Reagan's Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett.) But is not a healthy culture one that lets politicians and artists go their separate ways?

THERE is much to be said for Tyrrell's assertion that what dogs conservatism is a chronic narrowness of purpose and literalness of mind. Transfixed by style—Reagan's pantomiming hands, the refulgent wit of Barzini, Buckley, and Muggeridge—Tyrrell mourns its decline among the new fraternity of conservatives. That is why he hopes a fresh wave of liberals, following the neoconservatives of an earlier day, will list to the Right, and "bring imagination and drama with them." History teaches us, however, that imagination and drama rarely make good politics—only good political theater. And we need no more of that.

Explaining the Universe

THE MIND OF GOD: THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR A RATIONAL WORLD. By PAUL DAVIES. *Simon & Schuster. 254 pp. $22.00.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY MARSH

THE self-imposed task of modern science was first formally described in the early 1600's, when Francis Bacon suggested that a rigorous program of experimentally testing hypotheses about physical phenomena would prove far more effective than medieval scholasticism at discovering how the world really worked and finding the best ways to master nature. Over the ensuing 400 years, Bacon's program has proved astonishingly fruitful and its successes have transformed the way we look at the universe.

Nevertheless, the undeniable fact that we are able to describe so well the way the world works cannot itself be understood in purely scientific terms. That irony is the underlying theme of Paul Davies's *The Mind of God*. Davies is a well-known theoretical physicist who has written widely for both lay and professional audiences on subjects including quantum mechanics, relativity, and cosmology. His latest book explores such deep metaphysical conundrums as why the universe should be intelligible at all, how it is that the human brain can invent complex mathematical constructs, why these abstractions describe nature so well, and whether the answers to these questions imply that man actually has a special place in the universe.

Davies describes his book as a personal quest for understanding. He has concluded that the Baconian program of breaking the world

JEFFREY MARSH *writes on science frequently in* COMMENTARY *and elsewhere.*

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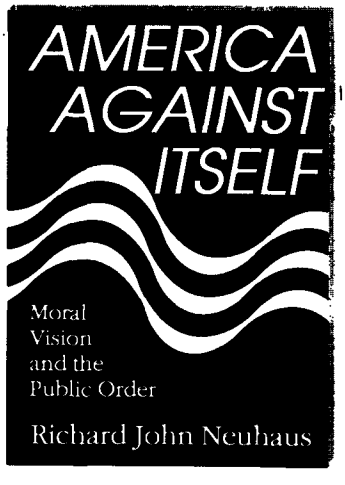

Partly autobiographical and thoroughly challenging, *America Against Itself* is an in-depth analysis of the pervasive cultural warfare that threatens to undermine the American social structure. Richard John Neuhaus, author of *The Naked Public Square*, tackles the abortion debate, the urban underclass, and the nature of altruism in a world that rewards uncaring. In addition, Neuhaus reflects on his role in "The Movement" of the 1960s. $19.95 cloth

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down into little pieces, studying them intensively, and then putting them together again works so well only because all the little pieces appear to behave in a way consistent with the same general laws of nature. Furthermore, those laws are few in number and are expressible in mathematical terms with which the educated human mind is quite comfortable. But science cannot explain why there are such laws or where they come from. Davies calls it a miracle that science works.

PERHAPS the most impressive part of that miracle is the description modern cosmology has produced of the history of the universe all the way back to the instant of creation—the famous big bang. Working from a theory based on the idea that nature's laws are uniform, scientists have reached the paradoxical conclusion that the universe—together with time and space—originated at a particular instant at which those very laws broke down. Few developments in science have roused so many respectable scientists to such agonized philosophical speculation.

Less than 30 years ago, most scientists were intensely uncomfortable with the idea that the universe could have suddenly sprung into existence a finite time ago—an idea much less appealing philosophically than the Aristotelian concept of an eternally existing and basically unchanging universe. But almost all have felt compelled to reject that concept since the discovery in the mid-1960's of microwave background radiation which according to the increasingly credible big-bang theory of cosmology was a measurable relic of the intensely hot and dense early universe.

To avoid the admission that there was in fact a unique instant of creation outside the laws of physics, several alternatives have been suggested, and Davies describes them. The cosmologists James Hartle and Stephen Hawking, for example, have proposed to do away with creation by combining quantum mechanics with general relativity. The latter theory renders both space and time inseparable from matter and energy, while the former, according to Hartle and Hawking, allows time and space to merge into each other (under the conditions that characterize the early universe) in such a way that one can describe the universe mathematically without requiring the big bang actually to have occurred. Hawking likes this scheme because it describes a completely self-contained universe, but it rightly leaves Davies still troubled by the question of why the universe and the physical laws it follows should exist at all, and how it is that humans are able to comprehend them.

DAVIES believes unabashedly that laws of nature *do* exist, that they are not merely convenient calculating tricks invented by scientists but discoveries that provide compelling evidence of an underlying order in the universe. That order, he also believes, necessarily includes man—or, more precisely, conscious creatures who can think mathematically about the universe they inhabit.

When it comes to the why and wherefore of those creatures, Davies also accepts the prevailing theory of biological evolution (according to which the natural workings of the laws of physics and chemistry on large assemblages of atoms produce, after a sufficiently long time, self-organizing molecules and eventually a panoply of living creatures which accommodate to their environments under the influence of natural selection).

But this theory, too, though it can explain the development of a species quick-witted enough to get out of the way of falling objects, can hardly account for man's ability to comprehend the universe theoretically. What is the selective advantage that would encourage evolution of a brain able and inclined to develop esoteric concepts as far from the world of real experience as quantum mechanics or non-Euclidean geometry? Moreover, as Davies demonstrates via an excursion into Gödel's Theorem and computer theory, a brain operating by logic alone could never discover all the phenomena allowed by the laws of nature. Yet the universe seems regularly to encourage the emergence of inspired thoughts that go beyond what logic or computational systems would elicit.

One such inspired thought is design. Evolutionary theorists reject the concept of design in nature as unnecessary, indeed heretical. They assert that genetic change, plus the forces of natural selection operating on large numbers of creatures over immensely long periods of time, can provide a sufficient explanation of the way those living beings fit so well into the world they inhabit. Davies does not object to this anti-design case as applied to the biological world, with its millions of creatures and species competing against one another, but contends that it does not explain physics and cosmology. After all, we have only one universe and one set of physical laws. To Davies, the fact that that one immense universe, in all its vast diversity, can be so well described by so few comparatively simple laws is an argument that design is no illusion.

EXAMINING the design of the universe, Davies does not shrink from asking if there may also be a Designer—a cosmic Lawmaker. After revisiting some theological concepts that are not the normal stock-in-trade of practicing physicists, and finding too many logical problems in reconciling free will with an omniscient and omnipotent Creator, he pronounces himself unable to accept either the personal or the philosophical aspects of classical Christian theology. More to his taste is the "process theology" of the American philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, whose God both influences and is influenced by the evolving universe, encouraging but not compelling certain directions of development.

The particular direction favored by Davies—and by a whole school of so-called "anthropic" theorists—is one in which the universe is designed in such a way as to make intelligence emerge, so that the inhabitants of the universe (or, as some prefer to say, the universe itself) possess an ever-increasing

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consciousness. These thinkers aim to explain the world as it has been described by modern physics, according to which it is impossible in principle to make a firm distinction between observed phenomena and their observer. The problem they face is that there is still no satisfying explanation of how the formal statistical structure of quantum mechanics, which is able to compute results that agree astonishingly well with experimental measurements, corresponds to the unique real world that is revealed each time an observation is made. In some fashion, it is hoped, the necessary existence of observers makes all this less difficult to understand.

Not everyone will agree, however, that this woolly explanation of the origin of design in the universe is more satisfactory than the personal religious approaches Davies cannot accept, and it is disappointing—and no doubt significant—that so rigorous a thinker should end in so imprecise a position. No wonder that so many humans have for so long preferred an unembarrassed acceptance of the abundant evidence of man's having been granted a favored position in the universe, one implying not only design, but purpose as well.

Religiosity Lite

A RETURN TO LOVE: REFLECTIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF "A COURSE IN MIRACLES." By MARIANNE WILLIAMSON. *HarperCollins. 260 pp. $20.00.*

Reviewed by JOHN PODHORETZ

DESPITE the national clamor over rising illiteracy and the allegedly hypnotic allure of the idiot box, Americans read more today than at any other point in our history. The problem is not with our failure to read; the problem may be with what we do read. Consider *A Return to Love,* the best-selling book in America these past months. It is another in the seemingly endless series of tomes that promise to change your life—not quite in the way that reading the Bible, or *Middlemarch,* might do, but rather by telling you explicitly what is wrong with you and giving advice on how to fix it.

The audience for such books ranges from recovering alcoholics and drug addicts, together with their families and other "co-dependents," to the lonely, the fat, the sick in body and the sick at heart. Far and away the largest proportion of readers also happens to be female, and it is they in particular who account for the success of books like *Smart Women, Foolish Choices*; *Women Who Love Too Much*; *The T-Factor Diet*; and *Toxic Parents.* The stuff of such books is food, fitness, beauty, career, and coping with men, men, men—men who cannot love, men who suffer from "commitmentphobia," men plagued by every known spiritual disease but whose troth you can nevertheless plight, if you dare, by following the counsel of *How to Marry the Man of Your Choice.*

It is easy enough to make fun of all this. As a literary genre self-help is perfectly formulaic—short chapters divided into bite-size chunks with cutesy subheadings, generously interspersed with case histories of men who won't do this and women who can't do the other. As for the advice these books give, in complexity it runs the gamut from "if you want to be successful in business, dress well and show up at the office earlier than your boss" to "if you want to marry someone, don't sleep with him until the tenth date or he might think you're cheap."

Nevertheless, people say that self-help books do change their lives for the better—and in truth it is no wonder, because the wisdom they peddle, though obvious and even trite, also happens to be sound. Marianne Williamson's veritable bible of self-help, *A Return to Love,* is no exception.

Actually, *A Return to Love* is

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more talmud than bible, since it serves as a series of commentaries on a 1965 work, *A Course in Miracles*, whose anonymous author was then (according to *Publisher's Weekly*) on the staff of Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. "The Course," as it is referred to in *A Return to Love*, changed Williamson's own life in 1978 when she happened upon it in a time of crisis. "It used traditional Christian terms, but in decidedly nontraditional, nonreligious ways," she writes. A Jew whose grandfather brought her to synagogue on Saturday mornings (and whose father took her to Saigon in 1965 so that she could see what war was like), Williamson has been dedicating herself to spreading the Course's gospel for the last ten years in lectures and classes. Apparently her work as a popularizer is much-needed, because the Course itself takes up several volumes, including a workbook—a fact that makes Williamson's 260-page book the first religious exegesis to outsell its own bible.

A Return to Love is almost unspeakably tasteless. As Williamson blithely explains, the Course appropriates terminology from other religions in order to add spice to its own. "Words like Christ, Holy Spirit, salvation, Jesus, etc. are used for their psychological rather than religious significance," she writes. And she continues, seemingly unaware that wars have been fought over less:

> The Christian religion has no monopoly on the Christ, or on Jesus himself. Jesus reached total actualization of the Christ mind, and was then given by God the power to help the rest of us reach that place within ourselves.

Nor does Williamson confine her offensiveness to Christianity; she uses a Jewish term like "Atonement" as a way of describing how we should forgive ourselves rather than take responsibility for the wrongs we have done to others. In this respect, as in others, Williamson is merely peddling a brand of Religiosity Lite, in which the customer gets to keep all the fun parts without any obligations and without true faith. Like Werner Erhard, whose est was one of the founding self-help groups, the Course invites us to accept our own innate perfection. There is no free-floating evil, no original sin; if only we give ourselves permission, we can each of us be infinitely loving and infinitely giving, we can all be "the Christ."

But if *A Return to Love* is a work of surpassing vulgarity in a surpassingly vulgar field, it too, like its self-help peers, offers both sound and surprisingly moving advice. Its main message is that meaning in life comes from surrendering to something larger than ourselves, seeking relief from inner turmoil by asking "God" for a miracle. Of course, by "miracle" Williamson does not mean a supernatural manifestation, but rather a shift in perception away from the "negative" to the "positive." Thus, says Williamson, the key to success in business is to love your customers. Similarly with romance: the trick is to accept that in a romantic relationship the only person you can change is yourself.

Above all, the key to a successful life is to give yourself over to the present:

> The past is over. It doesn't matter who we are, what Mommy said, what Daddy did, what mistakes we made, what diseases we have, or how depressed we feel. The future can be reprogrammed in this moment. We don't need another seminar, another degree, another lifetime, or anyone's approval in order for this to happen.

Again, obvious enough. But simple truisms like these, borrowed (like much of the book) from the precepts of the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, can indeed save a great deal of heartache for someone who has never run into anything like them.

Once upon a time you would have heard such wisdom from your grandmother, expressed in sugar-coated clichés: "Always look on the bright side." "If God gives you lemons, make lemonade." But these days your grandmother is probably too busy watching *Sally Jessy Raphael* and trying to get in touch with her inner child to bother. If the job has fallen, by default, to the likes of Marianne Williamson, that may not be such a bad thing for the national psyche, however appalling an assault it constitutes on the national aesthetic.

Amending the Constitution

WE THE PEOPLE: FOUNDATIONS. By BRUCE ACKERMAN. *Harvard University Press. 369 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by CALEB NELSON

MODERN constitutional law is vastly different from that of the early Republic. The federal government now enjoys much broader powers than it once did. The Fourteenth Amendment's due-process clause, which strikes many as purely procedural, now protects a variety of substantive rights. The advent of administrative agencies has complicated the separation of powers, and even the roles of the three original branches have evolved dramatically. Yet despite these immense changes, the text of the Constitution has been amended only seventeen times in the past 200 years.

Of all the sea changes in constitutional law that occurred without the benefit of formal amendment, the most famous is the "switch in time" of 1937, when the Supreme Court repudiated a long line of decisions and opened the way to broad government regulation of the economy. Conventional theory justifies this shift on the ground that the earlier decisions were wrong. But Bruce Ackerman, a professor at the Yale Law School who has made important contributions to political science as well as law, raises an alternative possibility. Perhaps, he suggests, both sets of decisions were correct: regulations were unconstitutional in 1905, valid in 1937.

People who make such claims typically speak of a "living" Constitution that adapts to changing circumstances. But Ackerman's ambitious project—which he has begun in *Foundations* and plans to carry

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forward in two future volumes—does not rest on any notion of gradual evolution. The Constitution, he says, actually *was* amended by the 1936 general election, even though its written text did not change; like the Founding and Reconstruction, the New Deal witnessed a "constitutional moment" that worked a monumental change in our higher law.

How did this happen? Article Five of the Constitution sets out what Ackerman calls the "classical" system of constitutional amendment: the House of Representatives or a national convention can propose amendments, which become law if ratified by state conventions or by legislatures in three-quarters of the states. The New Deal, by contrast, is an example of what Ackerman labels a "modern" system of amendment, a process that begins when a President claims a popular mandate for reforming our constitutional order. If backing for the reform movement is sufficiently broad and deep, Congress may then support the President's claim by enacting "transformative statutes." The Supreme Court, whose job is to preserve our higher-law norms, should invalidate those statutes, but if the President and Congress enact another wave of them and then win a sweeping victory in the next election, the Court must ask whether the reform movement has earned "the considered support of a mobilized majority of the American people." If so, the Constitution has been altered and the Court must begin to codify the change. No written amendments are necessary.

Ackerman places great emphasis on his adjectives. A "mobilized" majority has not given its "considered" support unless its members have thought about the issues as much as they would ponder important decisions in their personal lives. During normal politics, even citizens who are public-spirited enough to vote generally do not think about political issues so seriously. Their votes, in Ackerman's terminology, are "soft," not "deep." At such times, "We the People are absent from the scene, and . . . there can be no hope of capturing, in some simple snapshot, what the citizenry really thinks about an issue." When the People reappear, however, judges must respect their will.

Ackerman admits that his "modern" system of amendment has some serious weaknesses. In fact, he says its weaknesses outweigh its strengths, and he casually proposes another method of amending the Constitution through national referenda that would avoid some (though not all) of its difficulties. Still, he treats the modern system's purported results as far more significant than amendments duly proposed and ratified under the procedures established by Article Five.

Yet there are strong reasons to doubt the system's reliability. To begin with, the Supreme Court will be hard-pressed to distinguish "deep" votes from "soft" ones. Evaluating returns from all parts of the country, Ackerman's Court must ask whether "political talk around dinner table and workplace" has really focused enough on the constitutional issues and whether enough voters have really engaged in the intense "moral questioning" Ackerman believes essential to considered judgment. This job seems impossible for the most skilled political analyst, let alone nine overworked lawyers confined largely to Washington.

Even if the Court is adept at assessing the electorate's reflectiveness, it will have trouble identifying the precise principles the People have ratified. Ackerman suggests that elections leading up to constitutional moments focus the nation's attention on a single critical issue. Yet the elections he cites were not single-issue contests. Civil rights, for instance, were clearly important in the Johnson-Goldwater election of 1964, but for Ackerman's purposes they were not as important as they should have been. The campaign is remembered most for the "daisy commercial," in which the image of a child playing with a flower gave way to the image of a mushroom cloud; ironically, Johnson's victory may have resulted largely from popular fears that Goldwater would escalate American involvement in Vietnam.

The problem of translating votes into amendments would persist even if elections really did amount to single-issue constitutional referenda, because multiple-choice ballots give voters little occasion to indicate the scope of their constitutional principles. Ackerman suggests that if George McGovern had beaten Richard Nixon in 1972 and then had emphatically endorsed the War Powers Resolution (which purports to limit the President's authority to commit troops abroad without congressional approval), the Supreme Court could legitimately have "seized the first opportunity" to announce "the creation of new higher-law norms." Yet how could the Court tell whether the voters wanted those new norms to cover the whole world or just distant lands, foreign relations in general or just the war-making power?

One problem with Article Five, according to Ackerman, is that it "invites reformers to speak in . . . highly abstract legalisms." But his own theory of constitutional amendment adds an extrapolation problem to the interpolation problem the courts already face, by putting the abstract principles themselves, as well as their proper application, up for grabs. Ackerman then compounds this problem by calling upon judges to fill in gaps in the People's instructions. In both the modern and the classical systems, he says, mobilized majorities leave new constitutional principles strewn over old ones without designating which principles are still valid, which must be reconceptualized, and which must be discarded. Courts, in his theory, must clean up after each constitutional moment, "harmonizing the conflicting imperatives" left by different generations.

But Ackerman's concession that the People rarely indicate how to meld their new work and their old leaves him with a problem. Though he says that the Court "cannot simply shut up shop" until the People announce synthesizing rules, he does not explain why judges should be in charge of a synthesis that does not follow automatically from the People's decisions. After all, his

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theory portrays the Supreme Court as a "mirror" that "re-present[s] the conclusions reached by the People in the past." If moral leadership is really a matter for Presidents and concerned citizens rather than courts, then Ackerman contradicts himself when he encourages judges to reject one plausible synthesizing rule in favor of another.

DESPITE himself, then, Ackerman gives the federal judiciary enormous power to define constitutional moments. But he does not scant the other federal branches, either. Not only does the President initiate the "modern" system, but Ackerman also considers appointments to the Supreme Court a legitimate means of constitutional amendment. Thus, he treats the Senate's confirmation of FDR's "transformative appointments" as evidence that Roosevelt's constitutional vision really did speak for the People. Yet 96 Senate elections—spread over four years and 48 states—are unlikely to have spoken with a single voice. The (eventual) unanimity of the New Deal Court is important to Ackerman, but when a Court appointed by the President codifies the law in a way that the President wants, is it really clear that the People have spoken? The 22nd Amendment, which limits Presidents to two terms, suggests that the People do not think so.

Ackerman's "modern" system also gives Congress, no less than the federal courts and the President, immense power to define constitutional moments. In Ackerman's view, a variety of "framework statutes" should be treated "as part of a 'New Deal Constitution' that, together with the 22nd Amendment, sought to establish crucial institutional arrangements emerging from the popular embrace of activist national government at home and abroad." Yet there is great leeway in translating a "popular embrace" into statutory specifics. And by permitting mere statutes to amend the Constitution without any formal presentation to the People, Ackerman reduces the electorate's control over exactly what goes into our fundamental document.

ACKERMAN's theory seems to be shaped by his politics, for it dramatically decreases the role of the states and gives movements that support centralized government easier access to constitutional politics than decentralizing movements. Imagine that a President comes to power promising to shrink the federal government's domestic activity, and that Congress goes along by slashing taxes, deregulating broad sectors of the economy, and cutting federal support for entitlement programs. The new laws would not be "transformative statutes" in Ackerman's schema, for they would not violate existing constitutional law and so could not provoke a constitutional moment.

The New Deal decisions, after all, gave Congress sweeping powers but generally did not require it to use them; unless we create a constitutional right to shelter, or to a minimum income, cutbacks in entitlement programs do not challenge our higher law. In short, until federal restraint becomes as vulnerable to constitutional attack as federal activism, the "modern" system acts as a ratchet in which centralizing changes to the Constitution can be accomplished through informal methods but can be *un*done only through formal amendment. It is no coincidence that each of Ackerman's major constitutional moments—Founding, Reconstruction, and New Deal—"sought to push the system in a nationalistic and rights-oriented direction."

If Ackerman's own logic is shaped by his political predilections, there is also cause to doubt his crucial assumption of a sharp psychological distinction between reasoned and instinctive voting. Ackerman would ascribe real significance to the electorate's choices only when "the quality of reflection" is high. But even when we think hard about political choices, the arguments that sound best to us may be those that square with our instincts. Conversely, even our impulsive votes might not be unreflective if our political instincts are the products of our past efforts to think through fundamental issues. In either case, the instinctive voting of normal politics would reflect the People's will just as much as the reasoned voting of constitutional politics.

FINLEY PETER DUNNE's Mr. Dooley is famous for remarking that "th' supreme coort follows th' iliction returns." Whether or not this is true as a descriptive statement, we should hesitate to endorse it as a prescriptive goal—not because we are undemocratic, but because we rightly fear the enormous room for government officials to find mandates where none exist. It was this fear that led Americans to erect a written constitution in the first place. If we still believe in a written constitution, we should also believe in written constitutional amendments.

Tyrants

HITLER AND STALIN: PARALLEL LIVES. By ALAN BULLOCK. *Knopf. 1,082 pp. $35.00.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM G. HYLAND

SOMEONE was bound to combine the biographies of this century's most monstrous tyrants; fortunately, that someone has turned out to be Lord Bullock. Famed for his earlier biography of Hitler, as well as for his 1983 life of Ernest Bevin, this master historian has now blended and contrasted the lives of Stalin and Hitler in a narrative that is no less gripping for the fact that most of the details (not to speak of the outcome) are quite well known.

One of the fascinating questions about both men is how they were able to emerge as supreme overlords in two of Europe's most powerful countries. In the early pages of this book Bullock suggests that both were beneficiaries of the breakdown of old regimes that had set in before World War I and accelerated during the war. The resulting upheavals associated with the collapse of the Russian and German empires opened the way for radicalisms of both Left and Right.

WILLIAM G. HYLAND *was editor of* Foreign Affairs *from 1984 to 1992.*

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This is valid enough, although it does not account for the fact that out of the turmoil, two men who had no "natural or inherited advantages" were able to fight their way to the very top of their respective political structures. Their origins were certainly unimpressive: both came from lower-class families and grew up in peripheral areas of the Russian and Austrian empires. (Stalin was born in Gori, a rural village in Georgia, in 1879, and Hitler in Braunau on the river Inn ten years later.) Both, too, were raised by doting mothers and were abused or neglected by delinquent fathers: the elder Stalin (Djugashvili) was a drunken shoemaker, the elder Hitler a petty bureaucrat who eventually abandoned his family.

The young Hitler, an aspiring artist/architect, was rejected by the Vienna academy—a traumatic episode that was followed by a period of penurious drifting during which he absorbed the nationalism, the so-called socialism, and the virulent anti-Semitism of prewar Vienna. The war rescued him. Having distinguished himself in uniform, he remained in the army after the war as a propaganda specialist, and then found his way into politics. Gradually he became obsessed by two ideas: purging the German "race" of foreign (Jewish) influences, and conquering *Lebensraum* for the German people in the East.

Stalin, for his part, was a seminary student for several years at his mother's insistence. He rebelled by becoming a Russian nationalist and then embraced rudimentary Marxism, later claiming that the determining factor was the harsh discipline of the priests. Bullock, however, calls him a "born Bolshevik," and notes his admiration for the tightly knit, elitist, conspiratorial organization that promised to overthrow the existing order. As a Georgian Stalin felt himself an outsider, except within the clandestine network of the Communists; but he was also outraged by the backwardness of old Russia and was determined to make Russia a modern power, whatever the cost. Together with Hitler he shared one clear goal: to obtain, consolidate, and expand his own power.

The two embarked on different

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The Root of the Middle East Conflict. Many observers of the Middle East scene seem to believe that the root of the Middle East conflict lies in the dispute between the "Palestinians" and the Israeli Jews; that peace could come to the area if that conflict could be resolved and if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. They overlook that the conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jews long predates Israel's control over the administered territories, and that Israel would be defenseless if it were to yield control of these territories at this time.

"Real peace...can only happen through complete change of mentality, policies and historical ambition in the Arab-Iranian block."

The Menace of Islamic Fundamentalism. The clamor for yielding these territories to the Arabs is the first step in the immutable Arab attempt to liquidate Israel altogether. Because, certainly, Israel, with its fewer than 5 million inhabitants, compared to almost 300 million Arabs, cannot possibly be a threat to peace or a menace to the Arabs. The main reason that real peace is so difficult to attain is the political and cultural context of the Middle East, which is dominated by the menace of Islamic fundamentalism. By the tenets of this fundamentalism, Israel's size is not of importance; it is *the very existence* of Israel which is an intolerable offense, an unacceptable insult to Islam. The fundamentalist Moslems—Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and all the others—do not aim at peace with Israel or the recovery of some territory. Their publicly declared aim is the destruction of the Jewish state. In December of 1991, the Islamic Jihad stated: "...we will be satisfied with nothing but the destruction of Israel."

Real Peace Must be Global. Another reason that real peace will be difficult to attain in the present climate is that any agreement that could be attained in this round of negotiations would be a non-global one. The most fervent enemies of Israel—Iran, Iraq, Lybia and the Palestinian rejectionists—not only do not participate in the negotiations, but vehemently oppose them. Those Arab statesmen who have tried to come to terms with the Jewish state have invariably found a terrible end. King Abdullah of Transjordan was assassinated by the rejectionists, so was President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, and so was Bashir Gemayel of Lebanon, all of whom envisioned peaceful co-existence with Israel. Every Arab leader knows that any overt declaration of wishing to make real peace and to co-exist and to co-operate with Israel is a suicidal death sentence.

In view of these realities, is real peace possible? We all want peace, of course, especially the Israelis, who, five wars having been imposed on them, have been almost constantly embattled since the foundation of their state. But because of Arab-Islamic fundamentalism that cannot tolerate a Jewish presence on *any part* of "Arab territory" and because any peace arrived at would be non-global, such real peace would seem difficult to attain at this time. Real peace can only come about through a complete change of mentality, policies and historical ambition in the Arab-Iranian block, abandonment of fanatic fundamentalism, and change in governance from despotism to genuine democracy. And that may well take a very long time. In the meantime, Israel must keep up its guard and cannot afford—not even to please its friends, including the United States—to yield strategic territory, without which it would be vulnerable.

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paths to that end. After the failure of his abortive coup in Munich in 1923, Hitler reluctantly decided that the way to power in the Weimar Republic lay through mass political organization, operating if necessary through the ballot box. He easily dominated the small National Socialist German Workers party (NSDAP) and built it into a powerful instrument supported by the paramilitary Sturm Abteilung (SA). In 1932, profiting politically from the Great Depression, the Nazis obtained more than thirteen million votes in an open election, a gain of eleven million votes over four years. In January 1933, Hitler was invited to form a government by President Hindenburg.

Thus, for Hitler, legitimacy was never an issue—and this had important psychological effects. Inside his own party and inside Germany he was quite simply *Der Führer*, supremely self-confident in his right to be so considered, and for the most part free of self-doubt (though by nature a procrastinator).

STALIN, on the other hand, came to power in part through blind luck. For much of his early career he was in prison or exile. When the Czar was overthrown in February 1917, Stalin made his way to Petrograd where he immediately became a member of the Bolshevik high command. But he committed an almost fatal error in rejecting Lenin's insistence on overthrowing the provisional government; only by switching at the last moment did he assure himself a major position in the revolutionary regime. Still, he was never Lenin's designated successor, and in fact had been denounced by the ailing leader. His acute awareness that he was never Lenin's legitimate heir made him perpetually suspicious of all his comrades—one reason for the more or less permanent purges he conducted of the old Bolsheviks until virtually none was left.

Stalin was determined to create a true totalitarian regime in which no aspect of life would be left unaffected. By contrast, the more confident Hitler permitted some areas of German life to proceed without much interference. Although both men established police states, Stalin went much further, building a pervasive bureaucracy dominated by the party, a highly centralized economy, and a massive military machine—a system that survived in many respects until the entire edifice collapsed in 1991.

Both men understood the power of propaganda and indoctrination, especially when supported by a threat from the Gestapo or the NKVD. Both stimulated and encouraged the glorification of their own, radically different, personalities—Hitler being a flamboyant actor and gifted orator, Stalin rough and mean but also reserved and laconic. Both were at once disdainful of intellectuals and inordinately proud of their own writings—Hitler of *Mein Kampf* and Stalin of *The Economic Foundations of Leninism*—which were aimed at winning the approval of intellectuals.

Above all, both men were true believers in their cause, in themselves, and in their destiny. This, according to Bullock, is the "key" to understanding them. Ruthless by nature, and persuaded that they were history's chosen instruments, they felt completely justified in doing whatever was necessary, however horrific the human costs, to fulfill their destinies.

Between 1934 and 1938 both achieved total power. Then they began to clash. From the Spanish civil war, through Munich, to the end of World War II and the Holocaust, the story has been exhaustively researched and analyzed by others, and Bullock does not have much to add. The military contest finally came to an end on April 30, 1945, when Hitler shot himself to death in a bunker in Berlin, surely one of the most bizarre passages in modern history. Until the very end he was ordering imaginary armies to relieve Berlin. When his partially burned body was recovered by Soviet troops, Stalin ordered a great lie, that the Soviet authorities had no knowledge of Hitler's whereabouts; the truth was not revealed until the early 1970's.

Hitler left a final will and testament in which he urged "merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry." His last written words were: "The aim must still be to win territory in the East for the German people." Fittingly, the German people immediately lost territory, as East Prussia disappeared from the map forever and the Fatherland was divided, with the eastern part occupied by the dreaded Bolsheviks. As for "international Jewry," within three years Jews in Palestine had founded their own state, Israel.

BULLOCK might have been better served had he ended his masterful narrative here. The chapter on Stalin's New Order, from 1945 through his death in 1953, lacks the fire of the preceding 900 pages, no doubt because of the absence of Hitler as an effective counterpoint. In a concluding chapter, however, Lord Bullock recovers his form.

Neither of these two dictators, he notes, left a successor, but both left legacies which "would weigh heavily on Europe in the decades that followed." With the events of 1989-91 firmly in mind, Bullock writes that Hitler and Stalin were engaged in a major attempt to redraw the map of Europe. Today, with the collapse of the Communist regimes and the decline of the Soviet sphere, yet another attempt has begun, one whose success depends crucially on "the ability of the Soviet Union to avoid a relapse into civil war or a return to dictatorship." This is the issue, "rooted in the Hitler-Stalin period and its legacy, on which Europe's future depends."

Ever the long-view historian, Bullock ends by warning that we have still not grasped the "scale of the changes set in motion by the events of 1989-91." But, he adds with cautious buoyancy, about the past we can now be more certain: the era of Hitler and Stalin, although it represented "one of the blackest periods in Europe's history," nevertheless did not mark the end of European civilization. Just how near a thing it was, we learn from this deep book about two of history's most evil men.

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"I am ashamed ...of the human race, of mankind, of man."

A message from Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia, to the International Conference on Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe, sponsored by the Franz Kafka Center and The American Jewish Committee.

Recently, homage was paid in Prague, in the presence of an honored guest, President Chaim Herzog of Israel, to the memory of the Jews who had been tortured to death in concentration camps. I said on that occasion that I feel strangely paralyzed whenever I am confronted with a situation that calls for a comment on the endless suffering of the Jewish people, and that paralysis "proceeds mainly from a deep — I would even say a metaphysical — feeling of shame. I am ashamed, if I may say so, of the human race, of mankind, of man. I feel that this is his crime and his disgrace, and thus also my crime and my disgrace. It is as if that paralysis suddenly threw me to the very bottom of the perception of human guilt and of my own co-responsibility for human actions and for the condition of the world in which we live and which we build."

...I deem it extremely important that your deliberations will focus not only on the past, however cruel it has been, but first and foremost on issues of the day: on anti-Semitism here and now. I am referring here to the whole of post-totalitarian Europe where anti-Semitism has suddenly reemerged with its characteristic bigotry, limited outlook and aggressiveness....

The point is not whether anti-Semitism is more widespread in our part of the world than elsewhere: you are certainly well aware that we could also find many disgraceful cases in advanced democracies as well. In another respect, however, we could find a difference — a difference in the ways in which the more experienced democracies deal with this phenomenon and in the attitudes they adopt toward it. It is extremely dangerous for the new democracies to underestimate manifestations of anti-Semitism, to play them down, to fail to take action against them and, above all, to remain silent about them....

I have been told recently about a pub in an area where a large part of the Gypsy population live. On the door of that pub there is a sign which says something to the effect that Gypsies are not welcome in that establishment.... In my mind, this kind of conduct, which bears a striking resemblance to the anti-Jewish instructions issued under the Nazi regime, is clearly intolerable. More than that, it is also a case in point reminding us of the breeding ground which produced the Holocaust, of the thousands of inconspicuous, non-murdering anti-Semites who helped send their fellow citizens to the gas chambers.

I should like to pay tribute to all those who contribute to a climate in which people will not enjoy drinking beer in a pub which has on its door a sign like the one I mentioned above, even if official authorities may prove unable to have the sign immediately removed.

I hope that your voice will be heard, and I wish your deliberations all success.

Václav Havel

Prague, May 21, 1992

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